

TEACHER'S GUIDE



First_Nations_Art_Objects_UBC-2009, Photo by Leoboudv for Wikimedia. Released under CC-BY-SA-3.0

CLB

5

Aboriginal Art

Content Objectives

In this unit, students will:

- learn about the importance of cedar to Aboriginal art and culture.
- learn about different types of traditional and contemporary art.
- learn about different designs used by Aboriginal artists and the purpose of these designs.
- learn about a few Aboriginal artists.
- learn about the important role art plays in Aboriginal cultures.

Reflect

CLB Competency

Speaking 5 – IV Agree, disagree and give opinions in small group discussions or meetings.

Teacher's note: *The purpose of the following activity is to get students thinking about the topic and to give teachers a chance to see how much students know about Aboriginal art. Answers will vary. Teachers should encourage students to give reasons for/explain their answers to question #1.*

Thinking critically

Answer the questions. Then share your answers with a partner.

1. What is art? Put a check beside all of the items that you think can be art.

_____ a sculpture

_____ a house

_____ jewellery

_____ clothes

_____ a painting

_____ a hat

_____ a photograph

_____ a boat

_____ a handbag

_____ a song

_____ a blanket

_____ a dish

_____ a movie

_____ a box

_____ a musical instrument

_____ a TV show

_____ shoes

2. Finish this sentence. Art is important because...
3. What types of art do Aboriginal artists in BC make?
4. What types of materials do they use?

Imagine

CLB Competency

Listening 5 – IV Understand descriptive or narrative monologues or presentations related to everyday, personally relevant topics or situations.

Speaking 5 – 1V Agree, disagree and give opinions in small group discussions or meetings.

Speaking 5 – IV Give presentations about sequences of events; incidents in the past, present or future; or to describe scenes, pictures or daily routines.

Reading 5 – IV Understand simple to moderately complex descriptive or narrative texts on familiar topics.

Teacher's note: *The purpose of this listening is to introduce students to the many ways that Aboriginal cultures on the west coast of BC use red and yellow cedar trees. In the past, these trees were used to create items for daily life such as dishes, storage boxes, rope, clothes, mats, spindle whorls and houses. They were also used to create ceremonial items such as dance screens, rattles, drums, masks and blankets. These many different uses of red and yellow cedar trees played an important role in the development of Aboriginal weaving and carving—both of which are fundamental to traditional and contemporary BC Aboriginal art.*

Teacher's note: *Have students read the list of words below and look up the meaning of any new words in a dictionary before beginning the vocabulary activity. The purpose of the pre-listening activity is to ensure students understand the words in the listening and to review/introduce adjectives and adjective order rules that will be used in later activities.*

Before you listen – Vocabulary

Adjectives are often used to describe nouns. Many different adjectives can be used to describe the same noun. For example, we can say “a soft blanket” or “a comfortable blanket.” However, some adjectives and nouns don’t match. For example, it sounds strange to say “a soft dish” or “a curly dish.” Look at the lists below and match the adjectives with the nouns. How many combinations can you make?

Adjectives

- | | | |
|-------------|---------|----------|
| • beautiful | • hard | • soft |
| • curly | • heavy | • strong |
| • flat | • huge | • warm |
| • flexible | • round | • wide |

Nouns

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|------------|
| • blankets | • dishes | • rope |
| • books | • furniture | • sofa |
| • carpet | • hat | • utensils |
| • diapers | • jewelry | • umbrella |

Remember when we use 2–3 adjectives to describe a noun, we need to be careful about the order of the adjectives. Usually, but not always, we put adjectives in this order:

Opinion	Size, Length, Height	Age	Colour	Origin	Material	Purpose	NOUN
beautiful	tall	young		Canadian			woman
cute		new	red		rubber	rain	boots

Listen

You are going to hear a short description of something. Listen carefully and put a check beside all of the words in the lists above that you hear. When you are finished, share your answers with a partner.



What is it?: <http://youtu.be/WDBQ3qokxAk>

Now, look at all of the words that you put a check beside. All of the adjectives describe the qualities of the thing being described. All of the nouns are things that can be made from it. Can you guess what it is? Write your guesses below.

Teacher's note: *This audio script/reading and follow-up activity are included only in the teacher's guide so that students cannot see the reading while they listen. Please make copies of the student version that follows if you wish to use the reading activity in class.*

Teacher's note: *This listening/reading uses many compound sentences with the coordinator "but" to contrast different qualities of the cedar tree. Teachers may want to highlight this for students if they have been working on/are planning to work on compound sentences.*

AUDIO SCRIPT – WHAT IS IT?

Imagine something that is so **solid** it can be used to make tools, **boxes** and **furniture**, but it is so **soft** and **warm** that it can be used to make **clothing**, **blankets** and even bedding and **diapers** for a baby. This thing is so **wide** and **flat** that it can be made into a **comfortable** bed, but it is so **round** that one hundred people can sit in it all at the same time. It is so **sturdy** that it can hold up the weight of a **huge** house, but it is so **flexible** that it can be bent and woven into many different shapes. It is so **beautiful** and **fine** that it can be made into a **hat**, a **handbag** or even **jewelry**, but it is so **durable** it can be used to make **rope** and baskets that last for 100 years. It is so **strong** it can be made into **dishes** and **utensils** that never break, and it is so **fragrant** that it can be used to flavour food. This thing can heat your home and even keep you **dry** when you are outside in the rain. Do you know what it is?

Teacher's note: *If you are reading this aloud to the class rather than using audio, stop here and allow students to check off words they heard and try to guess what this is.*

It's a cedar tree. The Red Cedar and the Yellow Cedar have been an important part of the rainforests of British Columbia's West Coast for thousands of years, and for thousands of years they have played a very important role in the lives of many Aboriginal Peoples in BC

Vocabulary

There are many adjectives used in this reading to describe cedar trees. Look at the reading again and underline the following adjectives. Then write the context clues (words and phrases that help you understand the meaning of the words) in the table.

Adjectives	Context Clues
solid	e.g., can be used to make tools, boxes and furniture
sturdy	can hold up the weight of a huge house
flexible	can be bent and woven into many different shapes
fine	can be made into a hat, a handbag or even jewelry
durable	can be used to make rope and baskets that last for 100 years

Teacher's note: After students find the context clues, teachers can review the meaning of each word and have students match them to a short list of nouns to gain a clearer understanding of the difference in meaning between these adjectives. (e.g. fine carpet, fine dishes, sturdy table, sturdy house, durable carpet, flexible rope, etc.)

After you listen

Now read the short description to check if your guess was correct.

WHAT IS IT?

Imagine something that is so solid it can be used to make tools, boxes and furniture, but it is so soft and warm that it can be used to make clothing, blankets and even bedding and diapers for a baby. This thing is so wide and flat that it can be made into a comfortable bed, but it is so round that one hundred people can sit in it all at the same time. It is so sturdy that it can hold up the weight of a huge house, but it is so flexible that it can be bent and woven into many different shapes. It is so beautiful and fine that it can be made into a hat, a handbag or even jewelry, but it is so durable it can be used to make rope and baskets that last for 100 years. It is so strong it can be made into dishes and utensils that never break, and it is so fragrant that it can be used to flavour food. This thing can heat your home, and even keep you dry when you are outside in the rain. Do you know what it is?

It is the cedar tree. The Red Cedar and the Yellow Cedar have been an important part of the rainforests of British Columbia's west coast for thousands of years, and for thousands of years they have played a very important role in the lives of many Aboriginal Peoples in BC

Key words

There are many adjectives used in this reading to describe cedar trees. Look at the reading again and underline the following adjectives. Then write the context clues (words and phrases that help you understand the meaning of the words) in the table.

Adjectives	Context Clues
solid	e.g., can be used to make tools, boxes and furniture
sturdy	
flexible	
fine	
durable	

Talk about it

Discuss the following questions with a partner.

Teacher's note: *The purpose of these follow-up questions is to get students to label the different parts of the tree and think about the different qualities of each part to prepare for the following reading activity.*

1. Look at the picture of the Red Cedar or the Yellow Cedar. What are the names of the different parts of the tree?

roots, wood/trunk, bark, branches

2. What part of the cedar tree might be warm, soft and comfortable?

The inner bark of the cedar tree can be shredded to make soft bedding. The inner bark of the Yellow Cedar is particularly soft.

Teacher's note: *The answers to the questions below are included in the jigsaw activity that follows, so teachers may want to for only these questions rather than giving the answers. The answers are provided here in case teachers choose not to do the jigsaw with their students.*

3. How could 100 people sit in a cedar tree at the same time?

Large Red Cedar trees can grow to be 60–70 meters tall. These large trees can be carved out to make large cedar canoes that can hold 100 people.

4. How do you think people can make clothes, blankets, diapers, handbags and jewelry from a cedar tree?

All of these items were/are made from the inner bark or roots of the cedar tree. There are many different styles of Aboriginal weaving that are used to make these items. In traditional times, skilled weavers wove cedar bark into ceremonial neck rings, bracelets, rope, water-resistant blankets and hats, and even water-tight cooking baskets that were used to boil food. Today, talented Aboriginal weavers continue to make cedar bark blankets, baskets, bracelets and even handbags.

5. Do you know of any other ways that BC's Aboriginal Peoples used cedar trees?

Cedar trees were/are used to create a number of different things, for example, spindle whorls, masks, rattles, drums, totem poles, dance screens, sculptures, etc.

Teacher's note: *An excellent resource to learn more about the traditional uses of cedar is Hillary Stewart's book Cedar, which can be found in many public libraries. This book contains excellent drawings of many of the items created from cedar.*



Thuja plicata, commonly called western or Pacific red cedar.
Photo by abdallah for Wikimedia. Released under CC-by-2.0

Read and share

Read the article and answer the questions.

WEAVING CEDAR - PARTNER A

So how do people make clothes, blankets, handbags and jewelry from a cedar tree? They use the inner bark and roots of the tree. The inner bark of cedar trees is soft and flexible. Aboriginal weavers use long narrow strips of inner bark to make many items. In traditional times, they wove these strips of bark together to make essential items for daily life such as blankets, clothes, hats and baskets for storing household items and cooking. Today, Aboriginal weavers continue to show their amazing skill with the beautiful baskets, hats, bracelets and fashionable handbags that they create.

There are many different ways to weave cedar bark. These different techniques make different patterns. Therefore, baskets, blankets and other items made by different weavers from different Aboriginal cultures often have different patterns and styles. In traditional times, particular families owned certain weaving designs and styles, so people often knew which family made a specific basket or blanket from the way it looked. A mother or grandmother taught these designs to her daughter or granddaughter. In this way, the skill of weaving and the weaving styles and designs were passed down from one generation to the next.¹

¹ Jones, M. (2005). Coast Salish: The beauty of everyday things. In *Listening to our ancestors: The art of Native life along the North Pacific Coast*. Washington, DC: The National Geographic Society.

Because so many different things can be made from the cedar tree, many Aboriginal communities consider it to be a sacred part of the natural world. Therefore, when a weaver goes to the forest to get cedar bark to make a hat or basket or other item, she will be careful to only take what she needs and not harm the tree. She will also respectfully say a prayer and acknowledge the gift that the tree is giving.

Aboriginal weavers on the west coast of BC have also used other materials such as wool, mountain goat hair and spruce tree roots for weaving. Today, some Aboriginal artists in BC have become very well-known for their expert weaving skills and the many beautiful works of art that they weave.

Understand main ideas

Write a letter on each line to match the paragraph with its main idea.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. __d__ paragraph 1 | a. Cedar trees are very important and special to many Aboriginal cultures. |
| 2. __b__ paragraph 2 | b. There are many different styles and patterns of woven cedar bark items. |
| 3. __a__ paragraph 3 | c. Aboriginal weavers also use other materials for weaving. |
| 4. __c__ paragraph 4 | d. Talented Aboriginal weavers make many things from the cedar tree |

Understand details

Write a short answer for each question.

What parts of the cedar tree are used for weaving?

- inner bark and roots

What are some things that can be woven from cedar bark?

- blankets, clothes, hats and baskets, bracelets, handbags

Why are there many different styles of woven baskets, blankets, hats and other items?

- families owned certain weaving designs and styles
- weaving skill and the weaving styles and designs were passed down from one generation to the next

What do weavers do before taking the cedar bark? Why?

- respectfully say a prayer and acknowledge the gift that the tree is giving
- cedar trees are sacred

Share your information

Now use your answers to the questions above to tell your partner about your reading. You can also show the pictures from the reading when you are explaining your information.

Did you know...

Some Aboriginal weavers are able to make baskets that are water-tight. This means that these baskets can be filled with water. In the past, these types of baskets were used like pots for boiling food by placing water and hot rocks in them.



Skwxwú7mesh kex sitn (coiled cedar root carrying basket) attributed to Melina Moody, Shíshááh (Sechelt) married into Skwxwú7mesh. Photo Courtesy of North Vancouver Museum & Archives NVMA 1986.019.0165

Read and share

Read the article and answer the questions.

CARVING CEDAR - PARTNER B

So how can 100 people sit in a cedar tree at the same time? A master carver carves the tree into a huge canoe. In fact, cedar trees are used for carving many different items. Aboriginal carvers choose the wood of the cedar tree for carving because it is softer and straighter than other types of wood. Yellow Cedar is softer than Red Cedar, so it is often used to make smaller items such as ceremonial masks. Red Cedar is often used to make large items such as canoes and totem poles. It takes many years to become a master carver or a master canoe builder, and it is a skill that is often passed down from one generation to another. Today, some Aboriginal artists in BC have become very well-known for their expert carving skills and the exquisitely carved items that they create.

In traditional times, Aboriginal carvers made a variety of objects for daily life such as houses, dishes, canoes, boxes and spindle whorls from the wood of cedar trees. Many Aboriginal cultures on the west coast made and used large and small canoes for travelling and fishing. They also made different sized boxes for storing different household items and for cooking. Sometimes the outside of these boxes were carved and painted if they held special ceremonial items such as blankets or masks. The spindle whorl was another important item that was carved from cedar and other types of wood. It is a circular piece of wood with a hole in the middle, which was traditionally used to spin wool into yarn. The Coast Salish Peoples, who are known to be talented weavers, have carved many beautifully designed spindle whorls. Some Aboriginal master carvers still make cedar canoes, boxes and spindle whorls today.

Along with everyday items such as canoes, boxes and spindle whorls, ceremonial items such as masks, drums, feast dishes and rattles are also carved from cedar. These items are used during special occasions such as potlatches when Aboriginal families and communities gather to celebrate or recognize an important event such as a wedding, the birth of a child, or the death of a community member.

Because so many things can be made from cedar and it is such an important part of West Coast Aboriginal cultures, many Aboriginal communities consider it to be sacred. Therefore, before a carver cuts down a cedar tree to make a canoe, boxes or other items, he will respectfully say a prayer and acknowledge that the tree is a great gift from the natural world.

Understand main ideas

Write a letter on each line to match the paragraph with its main idea.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. <u> b </u> paragraph 1 | a. Ceremonial items are carved from cedar. |
| 2. <u> d </u> paragraph 2 | b. The wood of the cedar tree is good for carving. |
| 3. <u> a </u> paragraph 3 | c. Cedar trees are very important and special to many Aboriginal cultures. |
| 4. <u> c </u> paragraph 4 | d. Many everyday items can be made from the cedar tree. |

Teacher's note: *The UBC Museum of Anthropology has an educational website with resources on Haida and Squamish canoe culture. This website includes photographs, maps, interviews, historical texts and short films. There are interviews with canoe builders as well as weavers.*

Voices of the Canoe - <http://moa.ubc.ca/voicesofthecanoe/>

Understand details

Write a short answer for each question.

Why is the wood of a cedar tree good for carving?

- it is softer than other types of wood
- it is also a very straight wood (not in the text)

What are some things that can be made from the wood of a cedar tree?

- houses, dishes, canoes, boxes and spindle whorls

Why are spindle whorls important to Coast Salish people?

- The Coast Salish Peoples are talented weavers, so spindle whorls were an important daily item.

What do carvers do before they cut down a tree? Why?

- respectfully say a prayer and acknowledge that the tree is a great gift from the natural world
- cedar tree is sacred

Share your information

Now use your answers to the questions above to tell your partner about your reading. You can also show the pictures from the reading when you are explaining your information.

Did you know...

Many cultures make boxes from wood, but there is something unique about the cedar boxes made by BC's Aboriginal carvers. Do you know what it is? The sides of these boxes are made from only one piece of wood instead of four separate pieces. This long piece of wood is carefully carved, steamed and then bent to make the four sides of the box. That is why these boxes are called bentwood boxes.

Building Vocabulary

When we learn a new word, it is helpful to also learn the different parts of speech. Use your dictionary to find the different parts of speech of the following words and write them in the correct column.

Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
carver	carve	carved	-----
ceremony	-----	ceremonial	ceremonially
creation of / creativity	create	creative	creatively
difference	differ	different	differently
painting	paint	painted	-----
sculpture	sculpt	sculptured	-----
tradition	-----	traditional	traditionally
weaver	weave	woven	-----

Using new vocabulary

Now complete each sentence with the correct word from the table above. Be sure to use the correct part of speech.

1. Traditional **ceremonial** items such as masks, drums and blankets from long ago show that art has been an important part of Aboriginal society for a long time.
2. Many young Aboriginal artists are interested in learning the **traditional** art styles that were used in the past.
3. **Weavers** from different Aboriginal cultures often use different techniques to create baskets and blankets.
4. Some artist **paint** their totem poles and house posts with bright colours, while others leave the **carved** pole as it is.

Did you know... Not all Aboriginal cultures in BC weave and carve cedar. In fact, the Yellow Cedar and Red Cedar are found only on the northwest coast of North America. Therefore, traditionally, only Aboriginal cultures from the west coast carved and wove cedar bark items.

Consider

Teacher's note: To help students gain a better understanding of the diversity of Aboriginal cultures in BC, and therefore the diversity of Aboriginal art styles, teachers can show them a map of BC that outlines these culture/language groups. The following website has a useful map for this. If the link is not working, please search "map + First Nations in BC" <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/map.htm>

While completing this pre-listening task, students should look at a variety of images of different types of Aboriginal art from BC. This art could include spindle whorls, totem poles, masks, sculptures, paintings or serigraphs/silkscreens. There are many images on the internet that can be used, or students can be encouraged to look more closely at the images included in this unit.

Before you listen

Work in a small group. Discuss the following questions.

1. Look at the map of First Nations people in BC and answer the questions.
 - How many Aboriginal culture groups are included on the map?
 - What part of BC are the Coast Salish people from? [Southwest coast and southeast coast of Vancouver Island](#)
 - What part of BC are the Haida from? [Haida Gwaii](#)
 - What part of BC are the Gitksan from? [Northwest Coast](#)
 - Which Nation is the host of the city that you live in now? [answers will vary](#)
2. Which animals do you often see on Aboriginal art from BC? Circle your answers.
 - beaver
 - bear
 - eagle
 - hummingbird
 - raven
 - orca
 - salmon
 - frog
 - sea otter

[All of these animals are found on Aboriginal art.](#)
3. What other designs or figures are sometimes used?
[humans, supernatural creatures](#)
4. Why do you think Aboriginal artists include these animals and other designs in their artwork?
[Answer given in listening.](#)

Listen

Listen and check whether your answers to questions 2, 3 & 4 are correct. Share your information with your group.



Designs in Aboriginal Art: <http://youtu.be/EqMV6K5zppU>

AUDIO SCRIPT – DESIGNS IN ABORIGINAL ART

When you look at a piece of art made by an Aboriginal artist from BC you often see images of animals, humans and supernatural beings. For example, on a Salish spindle whorl, you might see salmon or an eagle. On a Haida canoe, you might see an orca or a beaver. On a Gitksan bentwood box, you might see a raven or a frog. Do you know why these figures are there? Do you know what they mean?

In the past, Aboriginal Peoples on the West Coast of BC had a very close connection to the natural world because they depended on it for survival. For example, they depended on cedar trees for shelter, transportation, clothing and warmth, and they relied on other plants and animals for food. Because of this reliance on the natural world for survival, Aboriginal cultures have developed a deep understanding and respect for the plants, animals and geography of their land, and this respect and connection is often seen in their art. For example, Coast Salish art often includes images of salmon because this fish is such an important part of Coast Salish culture and livelihood. Other common figures in West Coast Aboriginal art are bears, eagles, ravens, beavers, frogs, hummingbirds, orcas and sea otters.

Although many cultures use similar animal figures in their artwork, these figures can look very different. For example, a carving of an eagle in one culture might look really different from a carving of an eagle in another. This is because each Aboriginal culture has its own unique style of art.

So I told you that these figures show the close connection that Aboriginal Peoples have to the animals and land around them, but sometimes these figures have another purpose. Sometimes, they're family crests. This means they're images that identify a particular person or family. Crests can be seen on many different items including blankets, bentwood boxes, canoes and totem poles. Usually, these crests refer to family histories and stories. These stories might be about the family ancestry; in other words, they might refer to where a family comes from. But they can also be stories about a particular family ancestor from long ago who had an amazing adventure or encounter with a supernatural creature. These supernatural creatures have mystical, or magical, powers that they use to change people, animals or even the landscape. In many Aboriginal cultures, stories that include supernatural creatures explain why the world is the way it is or where animals and humans come from. If an ancestor had an encounter with a supernatural creature, he or she and all of his or her descendants might use an image of that creature as a family crest. When this crest is put on an item such as blanket or a totem pole it refers to that family story.

Well, I hope now when you look at Aboriginal art, you'll have a better understanding of what you are looking at and you'll remember that you are not only looking at a piece of art, you're also learning about Aboriginal culture.

Comprehension

Listen again. Circle T for true. Circle F for false. Rewrite any false statements to make them true.

1. T / F Many Aboriginal people feel a close connection to their traditional land.
2. T / F Images of dogs are often seen on Coast Salish art.
3. T / F Aboriginal artists use animal figures in their art because they worship animals.
4. T / F All images on Aboriginal art are crests.
5. T / F Some pieces of Aboriginal art refer to community stories such as legends and myths.

Vocabulary

Write a letter on the line to match each word to its definition.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <u> e </u> supernatural being | a. an image that identifies a person or family |
| 2. <u> b </u> survive | b. to stay alive |
| 3. <u> f </u> rely on | c. someone who is related to another person who lived long ago; a person's grandson or granddaughter |
| 4. <u> a </u> crest | d. a family member that lived a long time ago |
| 5. <u> d </u> ancestor | e. an animal or person who has powers or abilities that cannot be explained by science or the laws of nature |
| 6. <u> c </u> descendant | f. to need someone/something for support; to depend on someone/something |

Teacher's note: Here is the website for the Bill Reid Foundation which includes an image of Raven and the First Men and a brief summary of this story. This is a good example of an Aboriginal story that includes a supernatural being and explains where humans come from. <http://www.billreidfoundation.ca/banknote/raven.htm>

This website has a variety of Aboriginal myths and legends organized by tribe. As it is an American website, it refers to Aboriginal people as American Indians and includes myths from many Aboriginal cultures in the US However, it also includes myths from BC First Nations. <http://www.native-languages.org/legends.htm>

The link below takes you to myths and legends from the Squamish nation.
<http://www.native-languages.org/squamish-legends.htm>

Think, write and share

Write short answers to the questions. Share your answers with a partner from a different country.

1. What types of designs are used by artists in your culture?
2. Why are these particular designs used?
3. Are there many stories that include supernatural creatures in your culture? If so, describe one of these creatures.

Answers will vary

The Facts

CLB Competency
Speaking 5 – IV Agree, disagree and give opinions in small group discussions or meetings.
Reading 5 – I Understand simple to moderately complex personal and public social messages (such as those conveying compliments, invitations, likes, dislikes and preferences) related to a familiar context.
Reading 5 – IV Access and locate basic information from reference sources.
Writing 5 – I Convey personal messages in short, formal and informal correspondence for a range of everyday social purposes.
Writing 5 – IV Write a paragraph to relate a familiar sequence of events, description of a person, object or routine.

Discuss

DIFFERENT STYLES OF ABORIGINAL ART



Each First Nation on the west coast of BC has its own unique style of traditional art. For example, in traditional Coast Salish art there are 3 main shapes: a circle/oval, a crescent, and a trigon. A trigon is a shape with 3 sides. Often the use of these shapes creates a feeling of movement, or a ripple effect, in the artwork. A ripple effect is what happens when a person drops a small rock into water. The rock produces circles in the water. Work with a partner. Try to find these 3 shapes in the Salish artwork below.



Storm Sewer design by Susan Point and Kelly Cannell. Courtesy of the City of Vancouver.



Wade Baker, Squamish, Salish North Star in Maple Leaf (2010). Courtesy of the City of Vancouver.

Now look at these images of artwork from other Aboriginal cultures. What are some design features (shapes, colours, etc.) that are used by these cultures?



Tony Hunt, Kwakwaka'wakw, Thunderbird House Post at Brockton Point (1998). Courtesy of the City of Vancouver.



Joe David, Nuu-Chah-Nulth, Welcome Figures (1986). Courtesy of Vancouver International Airport.

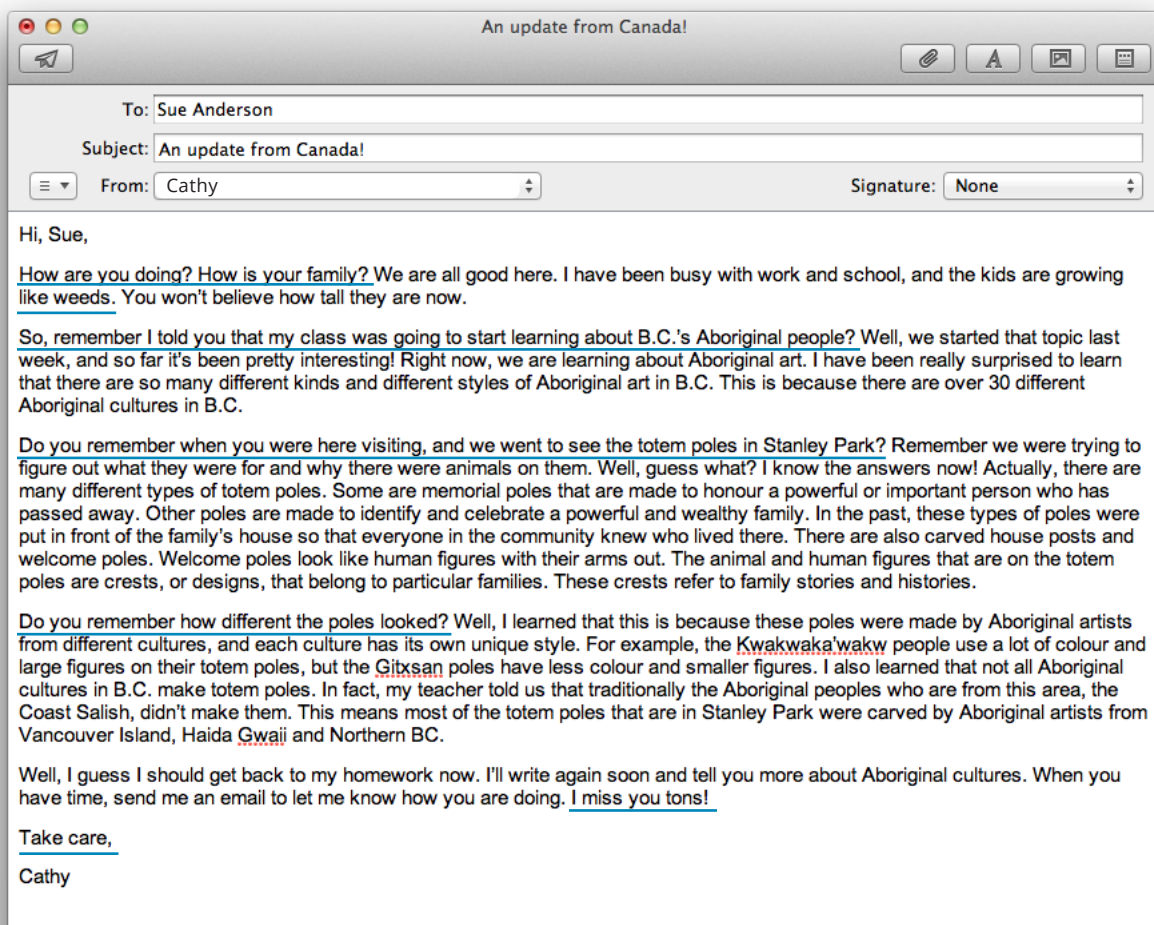
Before you read

Discuss the following questions in a small group.

1. How often do you write emails in English?
2. Who do you write emails to?
3. What kinds of things do you write about?

Read

Read the email and answer the questions.



Comprehension

Write a short answer for each question. Then share your answers with a partner.

Is the tone of this message formal or informal? Underline the clues in the message that help you decide?

informal – greeting and closing, informal first paragraph, use of questions throughout email

What is the relationship between the sender and the recipient of this email message? Are they friends, family, co-workers? How do you know?

They are friends. Clues: asking and giving information about family members; comment about the reader's previous visit

What are 3 surprising facts the writer has learned in her class?

1. There are over 30 different Aboriginal cultures in BC
2. There are many different types of totem poles.
3. Aboriginal cultures in the Vancouver area didn't traditionally make totem poles.

Write a letter on the line to match the totem pole and its purpose.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. <u>c</u> welcome pole | a. These poles are used by some cultures to remember and honour a person who has died. |
| 2. <u>a</u> mortuary pole | b. These poles were used by some cultures to show the wealth and power of a particular family. |
| 3. <u>d</u> house post | c. These poles are used by some cultures to tell or remind visitors whose land they are visiting. |
| 4. <u>b</u> house front pole | d. These poles were used to hold up the roof of a large house. The carvings were seen on the inside of the house. |

Did you know...

The phrase "low man on the totem pole" is often used to describe someone who has little power status, but this expression is actually incorrectly used. The lower part of the totem pole is just as important as any other part. In fact, some people say that it is actually a more important part because it is often the master carver, not the apprentice, who carves the lower part of the pole.

Parts of an email

Work with a partner. Fill in the table.

	formal email	informal email
What information should be included in the subject line?	a few words/phrase to describe what the email is about	a few words/phrase to describe what the email is about
What are 3 salutations you can use to start your email?	Dear _____: Dear Sir or Madam: To whom it may concern:	Dear _____, Hello. Hi, _____.
What information should be included in the first paragraph?	the purpose of the email / the reason you are writing to this person	an extended greeting a brief explanation of how you are doing a few questions about your friend's life, family, work, etc.
What are 3 closings you can use to end an email?	Yours sincerely, Best regards, Respectfully,	All the best, Take care, Best wishes,

Teacher's note: Encourage students to use a variety of adjectives in their email when describing the piece of art. Also, if teachers want students to practice writing more formal emails, they can have them send the email to them. If they want students to practice sending and replying to informal emails, they can have them send the email to a classmate.

Write an email

Work on your own. Complete the following tasks.

1. Look online for an image of a piece of Aboriginal art or a piece of art from your culture that you like. This can include an image of a totem pole, a basket, a blanket, a painting, a sculpture, a mask, a piece of clothing or jewellery, a piece of pottery, a photograph or any other item that you find interesting.
2. Find out as much information as you can about this piece of art.
 - Who made it?
 - Which First Nation/culture/country is this artist from?
 - When was this artwork made?
 - What is it made from?
 - How big is it?
 - What colours are used?
 - What designs or images are used?
3. Write an email to a classmate or your teacher about this piece of art. In your email include the following:
 - an appropriate subject line
 - an appropriate greeting including the name of the recipient
 - an appropriate first paragraph
 - a description of the artwork using the information you found
 - an explanation of why you like this piece of art
 - the link to the website where your reader can see a picture of this artwork
 - an appropriate closing including your name
4. Send your email. If you have exchanged emails with a classmate, read the email you have received and send a reply.

Stories

CLB Competency

Speaking 5 – I Participate in basic social conversations for some everyday purposes (such as expressing feelings; making, accepting or declining invitations; and engaging in small talk).

Reading 5 – III Get information from simple to moderately complex business or service texts (such as public announcements, brochures, notices, business letters and flyers).

Writing 5 – I Convey personal messages in short, formal and informal correspondence for a range of everyday social purposes (such as expressing or responding to invitations and feelings or providing quick updates).

AN ART EXHIBITION

Write and email

Work on your own. Complete the following tasks.

1. What is an art exhibition?
2. Describe an art exhibition that you have been to.
3. Where was the art exhibition?
 - in an art gallery
 - at a museum
 - in a community centre
 - at a school/university
 - other
4. How many artists were showing their work?
5. What type of art did you see?
 - paintings
 - sculptures
 - photographs
 - pottery
 - silkscreens/serigraphs
 - drawings
 - weaving
 - carving
 - other
6. Describe a piece of art that you liked.

A silkscreen or serigraph is a unique type of painting. To make this type of art, the colours of the image are pressed into a piece of paper or cloth one at a time. The artist will put on the first colour and let it dry for 24–48 hours. Then he will add the next colour and let it dry. He will repeat this process until all of the colours of the image are added.

Read

Teacher's note: Two of the artist descriptions below contain relative clauses (subject pronouns). Teachers can use these short descriptions to introduce/review relative clauses and then have students write sentences about the other artist, Aaron Nelson Moody, which contain relative clauses. This grammar will be useful when students write artist biographies in the following sections of this unit.

Teachers may also want to have the students underline/highlight the adjectives that are used to describe the art or each artist.

WEST COAST NIGHT

AN EXHIBITION OF ABORIGINAL TALENT

WHEN?

Saturday, March 15th

WHERE?

All Nations Gallery
243 Cedar Drive

WHAT TIME?

Doors open at 5:00pm
Meet the artists 6:00pm
– 9:00pm

FEATURED ARTISTS

Aaron Nelson Moody

(Squamish Nation) lives and works on Vancouver's North Shore. He is perhaps best known for carving large wood structures such as panels and doors. He carved 4 large wall boards for the Squamish / Lil'wat Culture Centre in Whistler, British Columbia during the 2010 Olympics. He also carved the entrance doors for the Canada House Pavilion for the 2006 Olympics in Torino, Italy. Recently, he has been making beautiful, carved, bracelets and other jewellery.

Damian George Stalaston

(Tsleil-Waututh Nation) is a talented serigraph artist who lives in the Vancouver area. He has been interested in Haida and Tlingit art since he was a child. However, many of his prints incorporate the circle, crescent and trigon shapes that are characteristic of his Salish roots. He blends different styles and traditional and contemporary elements to create truly unique images.

Debra Sparrow

(Musqueam Nation) was born and raised on the Musqueam Indian Reserve, which is located south of Vancouver. She is a talented artist who creates large, colourful, woven blankets and beautifully designed clothing. She is also an educator who loves to share the rich culture and history of her people with others. Debra's work can be seen in many places around Vancouver including the Vancouver International Airport and the University of British Columbia.

Teacher's note: *The Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam Nations are the 3 host nations of Vancouver. They all belong to the Coast Salish culture/language group. This means that although they are distinct Nations, they share cultural and linguistic similarities.*

To check comprehension further, teachers can ask students to rewrite the false statement to make them true.

Comprehension

Circle T for true and F for false.

1. T / F Aaron Nelson Moody belongs to the Squamish Nation.
2. T / F He carves wood and silver.
3. T / F He competed in the 2010 Olympics.
4. T / F More people knew about him and his art after the 2010 Olympics.
5. T / F Damian George Stalaston is from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.
6. T / F He is a talented weaver.
7. T / F He uses only traditional Salish designs in his art.
8. T / F Debra Sparrow is a member of the Musqueam Nation.
9. T / F She is a talented carver.
10. T / F She is proud of her culture.
11. T / F Many people have seen her art work.

Write an invitation

Write a short invitation to a friend inviting him/her to go to the “West Coast Night” art exhibit with you. In your invitation, tell your friend when and where the exhibit is and what your friend will see. Also, give suggestions about how you and your friend can get to the exhibit.

Teacher's note: *Teachers can also have students write paper-based invitations on invitation cards or online invitations using software such as Evite (<http://www.evite.com/>).*

Create

CLB Competency
Listening 5 – I Understand the gist and some details in moderately complex common and predictable social exchanges (that may express interests, likes, dislikes, preferences, offers, invitations and compliments).
Listening 5 – III Understand the gist and some details in moderately complex communication intended to influence or persuade (such as simple advice, opinion or suggestions) in everyday personally relevant situations.
Speaking 5 – III Give and respond to informal requests, permission, suggestions and advice.
Speaking 5 – IV Agree, disagree and give opinions in small group discussions or meetings.
Speaking 5 – IV Give presentations about sequences of events; incidents in the past, present or future; or to describe scenes, pictures or daily routines.
Reading 5 – II Understand simple to moderately complex, step-by-step instructions and instructional texts for multistep procedures related to everyday situations.
Reading 5 – IV Access and locate basic information from reference sources.
Writing 5 – I Convey personal messages in short, formal and informal correspondence for a range of everyday social purposes (such as expressing or responding to invitations and feelings or providing quick updates).
Writing 5 – IV Write a paragraph to relate a familiar sequence of events, description of a person, object or routine.

Teacher's note: *Here are some other options for this exhibition project.*

1. Students could do a community art exhibition. Take the class on an art walk around the city and encourage students to take pictures of the public art installations they see. (See the sharing and connecting section of this unit or the chapter on art in the [First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers](#) for more information about First Peoples community art.) Then have students research the artists who created the public art pieces, write short biographies about these artists and display their pictures and biographies in the exhibition.
2. Students could also research artists from their own country to create a multicultural art exhibition.

Host an art exhibition in your classroom

Share what you have learned about Aboriginal art and artists with the other classes in your school by hosting an exhibition in your classroom. Follow these steps.

As a whole class:

1. Choose the Aboriginal artists you will include in your exhibition.
 - Include both traditional and contemporary artists.
 - Choose artists that have different styles, use different materials and create different kinds of art.
2. Choose the date and time you will hold your exhibition.

In pairs or small groups:

3. Choose one of the selected artists to do research on the exhibition.
4. Choose 2–3 artworks by this artist that you like. Find pictures of these artworks in magazines, newspapers or online and print/save them.
5. Write a formal invitation to invite the other classes to your class exhibition.
6. Visit another class and do a short announcement about your exhibition. Hand out the invitations you made to the teacher and/or students of that class.
7. Write a short biography about the artist that you can post next to the pictures of his/her work.
8. Write some speaking notes about the artist and the works that you chose.
9. Use these notes during the exhibition to tell your visitors about your artist and his/her work.

As a whole class:

10. Decide how and where you are going to display, or show, the pictures of the artwork in the classroom. Remember to put the biographies next to the artists' works.
11. After your exhibition, create a class art magazine or blog to record your event. Include the artist biographies and pictures of their artwork in your magazine.

My Perspective

CLB Competency

Speaking 5 – IV Give presentations about sequences of events; incidents in the past, present or future; or to describe scenes, pictures or daily routines.

Writing 5 – IV Write a paragraph to relate a familiar sequence of events, description of a person, object or routine.

Projects & Assignments

These projects and assignments give you a chance to share your ideas and perspective on this topic.

Teacher's note: *The following tasks are meant to give students a chance to reflect on the information they've learned in this unit and apply some of the ideas to their own lives. Teachers should use their discretion when choosing which and/or how many activities to do with their class.*

Journal / Blog

- Write a paragraph about what you have learned about Aboriginal art. Write about the surprising or interesting things that you have learned.
- Write a paragraph describing a piece of Aboriginal art. Include the following information in your paragraph.
 - What type of art is it? (weaving, carving, sculpture, painting, etc.)
 - Describe its size.
 - What is it made from?
 - What colours are on it?
 - What designs are on it?
 - Why do you like it?
- Write a paragraph that describes one style of traditional art in your country. Include the following information in your paragraph.
 - What is this style of art called?
 - What type of art is it?
 - What types of materials are used to create this art?
 - What colours are used?
 - What kind of designs does this art have?
 - Where can people see this type of art?
- Write a paragraph that describes a popular or famous artist from your country. Include the following information in your paragraph.
 - What is this artist's name?
 - Where and when was the artist born?
 - How did the artist learn to be an artist?
 - What type of art does the artist create?

Presentation

- Do a short presentation on an Aboriginal artist and his/her art work.
- Do a short presentation on a style of traditional or contemporary artwork from your country.

Sharing & Connecting

Projects & Assignments

These projects and assignments give you a chance to learn more about this topic and/or share what you have learned with others.

Plan a trip to a gallery, museum or cultural centre

The best way to learn about and appreciate art is to see it with your own eyes. Plan a class trip to an art gallery or cultural centre that displays Aboriginal art.

1. Find a gallery or cultural centre in your area that displays Aboriginal art. The Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia website is a good place to start. <http://www.aboriginalbc.com/>
2. If there is a website for the gallery or cultural centre, look for the address and hours of operation. Also, look to see if any tours or workshops are offered.
3. If there isn't a website, call the gallery or cultural centre. Ask about the address, hours of operation and available tours or workshops.
4. Choose a date and time to go to the gallery or cultural centre. Then plan how you will get there. For example, look up the route and departure and arrival times for taking public transit.
5. While you are at the gallery or cultural centre, take notes about what you see. Your teacher may give you a specific assignment to complete.
6. After your visit, write a journal/blog post describing the gallery or cultural centre and a few of the items you saw there. If you did a tour or workshop, make a list of a 3–4 things that you learned.
7. If you did a tour or workshop, write a letter/email to thank the staff at the gallery or cultural centre.

Invite a local Aboriginal artist to your class/school

Invite a local Aboriginal artist to your class or school, so you can learn more about Aboriginal art.

1. Research local Aboriginal artists in your area.
2. Research the protocol (or etiquette) about inviting Aboriginal guests to come to your school. For example, sometimes a small gift will be offered to the person as a "thank you" for coming.
3. Find the artists' contact information (email or mailing address).
4. Write a formal email/letter to invite one or more artists to come and speak at your school. (Remember, many artists are very busy, so not everyone will be able to come.)
5. Once a date and time has been set for the visit, create a poster/pamphlet about the visit for the other classes. Include a brief biography about the artist, some pictures of his/her work and the date, time and location of the visit.
6. Visit the other classes to make a brief announcement about the event and invite the other students to come.
7. After the artist's visit, write a formal email/letter to thank the artist for coming.

EXPLORE ABORIGINAL ART IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Many towns and cities in BC have public art installations. These are sculptures or paintings that are placed outside in public areas. Many of these artworks have been created by Aboriginal artists. Have you seen this type of Aboriginal art in your neighbourhood?

1. On many city websites there is a searchable list of public art. Go to the website of your city. For example, if you live in Vancouver, go to the City of Vancouver website. If you live in Victoria, go to the City of Victoria website. You can also look in [First Peoples: A Newcomers Guide](#) for art around Vancouver.
2. In the search bar on the city website, type “public art installations.” You may find a list or inventory of public art.
3. Sometimes you can look for public art in specific neighbourhoods. Sometimes you can look for specific types of public art such as Aboriginal or First Nations art. Use the search tool to find public art by Aboriginal artists in your area.
 - Victoria: <http://www.landmarkspublicart.ca>
 - Vancouver: <http://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/explore-the-public-art-registries.aspx>
 - Nanaimo: <http://www.nanaimo.ca/EN/main/departments/culture-heritage/PublicArt.html>
 - Kelowna: <http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page264.aspx>
 - Prince George: <http://princegeorge.ca/CityLiving/ArtsCulture/Pages/default.aspx>
 - Prince George: http://princegeorge.ca/cityliving/artsculture/Documents/Public_Art_Tour_2012.pdf
4. Choose a few different art installations from the list to visit. If you are walking, you will want to choose installations that are close to each other.
5. Research the artists who created the installations. Find out where they are from and what other types of art they have created.
6. Plan a walking tour with your class.
7. Bring a camera on your walking tour to take pictures of the art installations. Later, you can add some of these pictures to your journal/blog along with a description of what you saw and what you thought about the art.