



"Let the spirit of this tree, let the time that it took for it to stand here, help the carver ... help the man whose time

will be spent creating a new life and a new image from you¹."

About This Unit:

This unit is not a collection of lesson plans, though there are some excellent LPs relating to film that I have included to support the movies included in this unit.

All the materials for this unit CAN be used for student projects and presentations without issues relating to copyright. The exception of course is any material used from the suggested texts included in this unit.

This unit is a collection of resources for classroom teachers and students to use that relate to several key themes. These themes are:

- Aboriginal Technology
- Importance of Ceremony in Aboriginal Culture
- Cedar: The Tree of Life for Coast Salish People

There is a deliberate attempt to **differentiate** in this unit as well. I've tried to include resources to support a variety of learners that teachers face in a typical classroom.

For example:

- we know that some students are reading above/below grade level. For these students to be successful and to learn along side their peers, it's critical that they have learning resources suitable for *their* reading level (in ALL content areas - not just ELA).
- we know that students' interest greatly so when *differentiating content* goes beyond addressing reading levels, we must also consider interests. The essential question might relate to cedar, the tree of life, but not all students need to study the same topic relating to cedar. Some might choose to learn about technology and how it has evolved over time (European contact brought steel tools - how did this change carving practices). Some might want to learn how cedar was processed (how were trees cut down, how were longhouses built without the tools we use today). Others might be more interested in

¹ Vickers, R. Spirit Transformed A Journey from Tree to Totem (1996)

the ceremony related to totem poles and how have these ceremonies changed over time.

- we know that not all students can access the curriculum through written text so ***differentiating the process*** is critical for them (thus the movies, multimedia material, and using Kurzweil to access written text and read from the internet).
- we know students like choice in showing us what they know so we need to differentiate product. One of the challenges we face as educators is finding resources that are suitable (pictures, songs) for multimedia projects that do not break copyright laws. This is why I have included numbers photos, multimedia video bites and more students to use.

For your information, I've included the ministry's definition for text. It can be found in the English Language Arts IRP. Understanding this definition gives us a broader perspective of ways in which we need to differentiate.

For purposes of English Language Arts, the term "text" denotes any piece of spoken, written, or visual communication (e.g. a particular speech, essay, poem, story, poster, play, film). A text may combine oral, written, and/or visual components. For the purposes of the ELA curriculum, literary texts are both fiction and non-fiction, and may be prose, drama, or poetry. Literary texts can be oral as well, and include such genres as epic, legend, myth, ballad, other forms of oral poetry, and the folk tale.

Finally, I have included some sample essential questions and relating PLO's that could be used to support this unit. The PLOs I've included for ELA relate mainly to presentation skills (oral language). Of course, other ELA PLOs would apply if students were generating written reports and projects and if they were reading text to gather their research material. You can select the ELA PLOs that you see fit depending on the projects your students choose to do. I've also included copies of the Quick Scales for Oral Language.

The next few pages describe the contents of this unit. Note that all movies come with detailed chapter markers and background information so teachers can guide questions and plan activities relating to the movies.

Unit: Tree of Life
Grades 4-7

Relating PLO's for Tree of Life Unit

Science

- demonstrate awareness of the Aboriginal concept of respect for the environment (4)
- analyse how the Aboriginal concept of interconnectedness of the environment is reflected in responsibility for and caretaking of resources (5)
- evaluate human impacts on local ecosystems (7)

Social Studies

- Aboriginal technologies (4)
- Aboriginal relationship with the land (4)
- Presentation skills (4-7)
- Relationship between cultures and their environments (6)
- Technology and exchange in ancient societies (7)

English Language Arts

- view and demonstrate comprehension of visual texts (e.g. cartoons, illustrations, diagrams, posters, photographs, advertising, film) B4 - G4-7
- use speaking to explore, express, and present a range of ideas, information, and feelings for different purposes and audiences A2 - G4-7

Potential Essential Questions:

1. Why is the Western Red Cedar often referred to as "The Tree of Life" by some Aboriginal Peoples? (it provided clothing, transportation, and housing).
2. How has the art of totem carving changed over time?

What nearly eradicated the art of totem pole carving and what turned it around?

How did European contact change the art of totem carving? (they introduced steel tools)

3. Why are ceremonies still a critical part of the creation and raising of a totem pole? (links to language and culture)

Suggested Teacher/Student Resources - Books

Books:

- *Spirit Transformed: A Journey From Tree to Totem:* Roy Henry Vickers. This book is written from a carver/artist perspective. Roy Henry Vickers describes his own personal thinking as he carves a totem pole for the Saanich Commonwealth Place (Victoria, BC). It includes The Legend of the Salmon People, the aboriginal story that inspired Vickers' totem, a brother and sister magically lead the salmon back to the Salish in an eternal renewal of fish that has always been of utmost importance to the people of the West Coast. [Available through the Aboriginal Resource Centre]
- *Where the People Gather: Carving a Totem:* Vickie Jensen
A great source for learning about all the aspects of carving a totem pole. This would be a great resource for students. Vickie Jensen collaborated with renowned Nisga'a artist Norman Tait and his crew to document the actual process of carving and raising a modern totem pole. [Available through the Aboriginal Resource Centre]
- *Totem Pole Carving: Bringing a Log to Life:* Vickie Jensen
This text is similar to Where the People Gather but not as detailed and might be appropriate for students who need a text at a lower reading level. [with kit]
- *Looking at Totem Poles:* Hilary Stewart
This book is suitable for students who are researching totem poles. It provides detailed information about the types of totem poles, differences in styles of poles from various First Nation peoples, information about the figures on totems and what these figures represented. [with kit]

- *Cedar*: Hilary Stewart
This is an outstanding book for students to use for researching the significance of cedar to Coast Salish people. It has detailed sketches of Aboriginal technology (how they raised beams, raised totem poles, moved logs, how they fell trees, etc). I would strongly recommend having several copies of this text available for students to use. All diagrams are labeled which makes it an excellent resource for students who need to gather information but are not reading at grade level (they can gather information through pictures and diagrams). [with kit]

I would also strongly recommend her book titled, *Indian Fishing, Early Methods on the North Coast* by Hilary Stewart.

- *Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast*: Hilary Stewart
This text provides photos and descriptions of northwest coast totem poles. It also provides information on the figures and crests. [with kit]
- *Cedar - The Tree of Life* - N McSpadden and Elaine Brown using IPHOTO (see appendix) [with kit]

Book Samples for Different Reading Levels

Sample 1:

- *Where the People Gather: Carving a Totem*: Vickie Jensen (Higher level)
- *Carving a Totem Pole*: Vickie Jensen (Lower Level)

Sample 2:

- *Cedar* by Hillary Stewart (higher level - though suitable for many levels because of all the illustrations)
- *Cedar: Tree of Life* by Elaine Brown and N. McSpadden (Lower Level) - See appendix: Embedded in a Powerpoint

Sample 3:

- *Spirit Transformed: A Journey from Tree to Totem*: Roy Henry Vickers (Higher Level)
- Scan text into Kurzweil (suggestion)

Websites:

SFU Xa:ytem Project:

For Information on the Project: <http://www.lidc.sfu.ca/news/xaytem/>

For a virtual tour: <http://www.sfu.museum/time/en/>

For a glossary: <http://www.sfu.museum/time/en/glossary/>

Be sure to look at Teacher Resources, Downloads and Video/Audio

BC Archives:

For information on totems:

<http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/exhibits/timemach/galler07/frames/totems.htm>

FourHosts:

For information on canoe carving:

<http://www.fourhostfirstnations.com/canoe-carving-a-revered-and-ancient-art/>

Squamish Lil'wat online activities:

To explore the Inland Journey Exhibition click here:

www.inlandjourney.ca

To explore the Squamish Nation Exhibition click here:

www.inlandjourney.ca/squamish-glimpses

To explore the Lil'wat Nation Exhibition click here:

www.inlandjourney.ca/lilwat-glimpses

Katzie First Nation Website: <http://www.katzie.ca/>

The Semiahmoo People: <http://members.shaw.ca/brownja/semipeople.htm>

Videos Included with Unit - See Movie Synopsis for more detail:

- Awakening Ceremony: Student Support Services - June 2010
- Cedar Harvesting - Malcolm Knapp Research Forest - May 2010
- Interview with Leonard Wells, Carver - Student Support Services - May 2010
- Pole Raising Ceremony: Hydaburg, Alaska - June 2010
- Welcome Pole Cleansing: Fraser Heights - Oct 2010
- Willie Pierre - Katzie Elder - Origin of Katzie People - Link to Land and Resources for Katzie People - May 2010

Audio Included with Unit:

- **Richard Pierre - History of Katzie** - Short Version (4 minutes) and copy of text (adapted from: Katzie Ethnographic Notes - The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian - Diamond Jenness, Wilson Duff, Wayne Suttles (Author))
- **Richard Pierre - The Katzie Book of Genesis** - full version (54 minutes) and copy of text (pgs 10-21) Katzie Ethnographic Notes - The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian - Diamond Jenness, Wilson Duff, Wayne Suttles (Author)
- **Willie Pierre** - Songs - Katzie Elder - use this music for multimedia projects

Other:

Totem Poles In The Royal BC Museum - Article by Dr. Martha Black

(permission granted from the museum to include this article that describes the totem poles) - PDF available online at

http://www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/content_files/files/totempoles.pdf

Leonard and Leslie Wells Article from City of Surrey - PDF available online at <http://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/1663.aspx>

Project Samples:

- **Graphic comic (Using Comic Life)** to demonstrate why cedar is called the tree of life.
- **Powerpoint slides (small) for vocabulary cards relating to Aboriginal Tools**

- Powerpoint slide (large) on Aboriginal Tools - could be laminated and coiled for a book on Aboriginal Tools
- ***Powerpoint - Cedar Book By N. McSpadden and Elaine Brown*** - could be laminated and coiled for a book on Aboriginal Tools

Movie Synopsis - Chapter Markers

Awaking Ceremony - Use Cover Clues LP²

Student Support Services - June 2010

Time: 24 minutes

Chapter Markers and Background:

1. Title
2. Gayle Bedard, District Principal of SD 36, describes why this 'awakening ceremony' is happening. She describes how this pole was commissioned years ago and the project was abandoned. The pole was moved from various locations until it ended up at Student Support Services. The totem was stored under the gym stage.

The original artist is not available to complete the work so an artist from Semiahmoo will finish it. The artist is Leonard Wells.

3. An elder, Willie Pierre, from Katzie First Nation describes the 'awakening ceremony' that is about to happen. Willie Pierre will awaken the totem by brushing it with cedar boughs. He will have the artist do the same. He explains that because the pole has been untouched for so long, it has gone to sleep. He will awaken it.

This ceremony is significant because of the disrespectful way in which the cedar pole has been treated. A cedar tree gave its life in order to become a pole. To be left unfinished for so long might be seen as a sign of disrespect.

Willie Pierre will awaken the pole and cleanse it so that it can be completed in a respectful way.

4. Cyril Pierre, an elder from Katzie, speaks about how important it is to recognize the original carver's work. The original artist is unable to complete this work (he was side tracked - a reference to issues of money or perhaps alcohol) but what is important to understand is that regardless of issues in his life now, we must recognize the talent that still resides deep inside him.

Cyril hopes that when this pole is finally completed, when the totem comes alive again, the spirits that reside in the pole (thunderbird, humming bird, eagle, raven, bear, whale) will go back to the original artist who was

² http://islandwood.org/school_programs/media/teaching-materials/experiencing-film/?searchterm=Experiencing%20film

sidetracked and awaken that talent that is still inside him.

He also tells us that the Katzie are not totem people but that the figures on the totem are figures are very powerful to all Aboriginal people.

5. Gayle Bedard thanks teachers and staff for attending this event. She explains their role now as witnesses. They must tell people of this event. They must describe what they've seen and what they've witnessed.

She also describes that as a way of thanking them as witnesses, it is an Aboriginal tradition to feed them, to participate in a feast.

Cedar Harvesting - Use Cinquain Expressions or Build a Brochure³

May 2010

Time: 37 minutes

Chapter Markers and Background:

1. Sheryl Powers, a forestry worker from Malcolm Knapp Research Forest, explains that Aboriginal organizations like the Surrey School District Aboriginal Department have been permitted to harvest cedar. The trees that will be harvested for cedar bark come from trees that are about to be cut down for lumber.
2. Paula is about to harvest a strip of cedar from this cedar tree. First she says a prayer to the tree explains to the tree that the bark will be used to teach children in the Surrey School District about the cultural traditions of Aboriginal people.

She demonstrates how to harvest cedar. She explains we generally take cedar from the east side of the tree because this is where the sun first comes into contact with the tree (sun rises in the east) and the intensity of the sun in the morning time will not harm the tree.

Paula uses an ax and a crow bar to harvest the cedar. She makes a cut in the shape of a U and then uses the crow bar to separate the seal between the inner and outer bark of the cedar tree. Then she pulls.

She explains that we only ever take one strip of cedar from a living tree. This allows the tree to recover. She explains that we take the bark from the side of tree with the least amount of branches (which is typically the east side of the tree). Paula explains that if the bark comes easily from the tree, it is a sign that the cedar has accepted your reason for taking its bark.

She also explains that people can tell if First Nations peoples have been in the area many, many years ago but finding scars on trees from where cedar bark has been harvested.

3. Sometimes a harvester will run into a knot on the tree. A piece of rope is attached to the cedar bark that has been peeled and this allows the harvester to get more leverage to pull.

³ http://islandwood.org/school_programs/media/teaching-materials/experiencing-film/?searchterm=Experiencing%20film

4. Richard Pierre shares the importance of cedar to Aboriginal people. He explains that the Katzie call the cedar 'the tree of life'. This is an important clip. He describes how the cedar provided transportation, clothing, baskets, fishing nets and lines, shelter and other life essentials. He links cedar to Aboriginal technologies.
5. Paula demonstrates how to separate the outer bark from the inner bark. It is the inner bark that is used for making baskets, clothing, rope and such. Paula uses a knife to separate the bark.

Paula lets her cedar bark rest for about 30 minutes before she begins to separate the inner and outer bark.

6. Paula demonstrates how to make a cedar rose using the inner bark of a cedar tree.
7. Richard demonstrates how to separate the inner and outer bark. He does not use a tool but rather uses his hands.

He lets his cedar rest for approximately an hour before attempting to separate the cedar. He also describes the location of the UBC Research Forest and describes some of the things that happen in a research forest.

8. Paula demonstrates how to make cedar rope.
9. Sheryl Powers explains what happens in a research forest.
10. Stills showing the steps for harvesting cedar.

Interview with Leonard Wells - Use Tricks of the Trade LP⁴

Student Support Services - May 2010

Time: 14 minutes

Chapter Markers and Background Information

1. Title. This is an interview between Paula Leon, a Katzie member and employee of SD 36 and Leonard Wells, Semiahmoo artist. Leonard Wells has been commissioned to complete two Welcome Poles for our new district building. It is important to know that he is from Semiahmoo, one of the partners in the SD 36 Enhancement Agreement.
2. Paula gives a description of the project. Leonard introduces himself and describes how he learned to carve by apprenticing to Robert Davidson.
3. Leonard describes what he likes about carving and how he was drawn to it because of the designs and the work his younger brother, Leslie Wells (also a carver) was doing.
4. We learn where the best place is to position a finished pole. If it sits directly in the sun, it is more likely to dry out and crack.
5. Leonard shares some drafts he's prepared. He explains that a Welcome Pole often sits in front of a house and greets visitors. Generally the characters on the pole are in human form and the arms are extended up to indicate visitors are welcomed.

Leonard says that although he has sketched what he plans to draw, sometimes what he draws, what he sees in his head and what he eventually carves can be very different.

6. Leonard tells us how long he's been a carver.
7. Leonard tells us how long it will take to complete both Welcome Poles.
8. We learn that typically after a carver has finished a pole, he never touches it again. Others are hired to move and raise the pole.
9. Still pictures of his drawings.

⁴ http://islandwood.org/school_programs/media/teaching-materials/experiencing-film/?searchterm=Experiencing%20film

10. We learn what an artist looks for when selected a tree for a totem. We also learn that getting trees is more difficult these

Pole Raising Ceremony - Auditory Perceptions⁵

Hydaburg, Alaska - June 2010

Time: 6-1/2 minutes

Chapter Markers and Background:

1. Title: This movie was filmed by Gayle Bedard in Hydaburg Alaska. This pole raising was a public event.
2. Community members carry the pole through the village. In this scene, we see numerous community members carrying the pole. Several children can be seen sitting on the pole. It is thought that these might be family relations of the carver. It is important to note that the carver never touches the pole after the carving has been finished.

Notice the singers and drummers who perform as the totem is being carried. Also notice the wood supports that the 'warriors' are using to carry the totem.

3. Before the pole is raised, a ceremonial dance is performed. In some First Nation communities, the dance is performed by the carver and the dance is called the dance of the carver. During the dance, the carver wears the tools in which he used to prepare the carving around his neck.

In this segment, it is community members who perform, drum and dance.

4. In this scene we see the pole being raised. Before this can happen a few things would have had to happen. Traditionally, a hole would have been dug. Log crutches (brace) and crossbars would have been readied to support the totem after it has been raised. Ropes would have been attached and used to raise the pole and to steady it while it is being raised.

In this case, a cement foundation has been laid. You'll see a pole behind the totem that has been set in the foundation. The totem will be attached to this pole.

5. This is a block of text that describes how the hole would have been filled if it had been raised in a traditional manner. Larger rocks prevent the pole from blowing over during windstorms and smaller rocks provide important drainage.

⁵ http://islandwood.org/school_programs/media/teaching-materials/experiencing-film/?searchterm=Experiencing%20film

After the pole is raised, the chief responsible for commissioning the pole would host a potlatch. It would be his responsibility to ensure all invited guests from neighbouring communities would be housed and fed for the special event. He would also host a give away in which guests would receive gifts to thank them for witnessing this work. Their role, as a witness, would be to take what they have seen and heard and share it with their community members.

It is worth discussing why a pole raising was a rare event. The cost to a chief to host such an event would be very expensive.

6. Still shots: here you will see a number of still shots. Of interest is the picture of the totem being placed on the brace before it is rested.

Notice too, how many people it takes to carry the pole through the community.

Welcome Pole Cleansing - Concept Map⁶

Fraser Heights Secondary - October 2010

Time: 33 minutes

The Surrey School District has commissioned Leonard Wells, a Semiahmoo carver, to carve two Welcome Poles for our new district building. The Aboriginal Department would like students to learn about the culture and history of Aboriginal peoples through this process.

In this movie, we see some of the cultural traditions that were practiced by Aboriginal peoples when they selected a cedar tree to be carved into a totem pole. It's important to note that many of those cultural traditions are still practiced today.

The tree you see in this movie fell several years ago during a windstorm. Two parts of it will be used to make Welcome Poles and the third piece will remain at Fraser Heights for a canoe paddle-making project.

Chapter Markers and Background:

11. Willie Pierre, Katzie elder has been blanketed (a tradition to signify that he has been hired as the speaker for today's events). He explains that we will now call forward people to serve as witnesses for this event. The role of the witness is to take back what they have heard and seen and share it with their respective communities. A witness was traditionally paid and was given an armband that signifies to everyone at the event that they have been recognized as a witness.

Witnesses include: Leonard Wells (Katzie artist), Cyril Pierre (Katzie elder and wood cutter), Jay Baily (Katzie Chief), Andrew Holland (Principal of Fraser Heights), Angus Stuart (representative from Student Support Services and SD 36) and two students from Fraser Heights.

12. Willie Pierre conducts the cleansing ceremony. He sings and brushes the tree with cedar boughs. He describes the significance of this brushing and describes how sacred the cedar tree is to Aboriginal people. He explains that what we are doing today is nothing new. Aboriginal people have always performed ceremonies to thank mother earth for her gift of cedar. He explains that the brushing of the tree with cedar boughs awakens the cedar and prepares it to take a new form and that this is our way of giving thanks to the tree for giving its life. He explains that once the tree is completed, it will take a new life form and the spirit of the figures on the totem will take life.

⁶ http://islandwood.org/school_programs/media/teaching-materials/experiencing-film/?searchterm=Experiencing%20film

Willie asks the artist to brush the cedar tree with cedar boughs too, as he is about to undertake the work to transform the tree.

13. A truck removes the tree from the forested area. Today we have the benefit of new technologies to move and cut the cedar tree. See Hilary Stuart's book, *The Cedar*, to learn more about how this process would have been done traditionally.

14. Cyril Pierre, a Katzie elder has been hired to be the woodcutter today. He is a community member who is called on to do this because of his expertise in the area of woodcutting. Traditionally, each community had members who held specific roles. Each community might have people designated as speakers, as carvers, and woodcutters. People were selected for these roles because they demonstrated a specific talent in this area.

It is important that an expert woodcutter is hired because it is possible to cause a tree to split in an inappropriate area that would render the tree unfit for a totem.

15. A truck driver is acknowledged in this scene. Traditionally, Aboriginal people recognize all those who have a special role in such an event. The truck driver is recognized for his skill and the important work he will do in transporting the tree to the artist's home where the carving will be done.
16. Josh, a student from Fraser Heights, speaks on behalf of Fraser Heights. He practices the tradition of also thanking those involved in today's event and presents them each with a T-shirt from Fraser Heights Secondary.

It is important to know that it is not always the size of the gift that matters but that people who contributed their special talents to an event are called forward and recognized in some way.

17. Fraser closes the ceremony. He asks the witnesses to take what they have seen and heard back to their respective communities.

Aboriginal people did not have a written record. Traditionally they maintained their histories through the sharing of stories. Witnesses contributed significantly by bringing back their recollection of significant events.

Willie Pierre - Katzie Elder

Shares His Version of Katzie Origin Story
and
How Katzie People Value the Resources of the Forest
May 2010

Time: 7 - 8 minutes

Background:

Willie Pierre provides a brief origin story of the Katzie First Nation peoples. It is important to note that there are other versions.

Willie also explains how the Katzie people are connected to the land and that it has always provided important resources for the Katzie. It provided medicines, food and of course the cedar provided a great many things.

This video clip was filmed at the Malcolm Knapp Research Forest.

18.

Appendix - Item One - Short Version of Katzie History - text

[goes with audio cd]

Katzie History Narrated by Richard Pierre



Version 1:

To the Katzie people there is one called the "creator", to creator of all things. To other people, this could be their god or mother earth etc.

Katzie's History is that creator created groups of people for various places and each of these groups have special leaders. One leader of one group is known as "ts'seele'nuxw" whose name means "he who grows and multiplies". The next leader for a second group is named "sma'k'wuts", a name with an unknown translation. The next leader for the third group [is] "xwtheputstun" another name who carries no meaning today. A fourth under "swaneset", the supernatural benefactor, and a fifth group which Katzie is known to be under "thelhutstun" meaning "clothed with power was created at Pitt Lake.

When human beings were first created, the land was strangely different from what it is now. There were no leafy trees to cast shadows, the tall dark green firs stood as they stand today but were grim and silent. No winds rocked their summits, no birds nested in their branches, no animals roamed by day or night. In the waters of the sea and the rivers were clams and mussels, but no salmon, eulachon, or sturgeon, no seals, and no sea lions.



Our Creator told swaneset, "I shall create in the sky one who shall watch over you and keep you warm. He shall rise and set each day so that you may sleep in darkness and be strong and you shall pray to him and bless him for the warmth.

I shall create also another being who shall light up the earth for you by the night. It shall commence small and wax big, then when it is full, it shall wane and disappear so shall it enable you to count the passing days.

So the sun was created to warm you by day and the moon to give you light by night, the weather shall not be changeless but we were given signs. When you see a rainbow in the sky you shall know there will be fine weather in the morning and your hearts shall be glad.



Appendix - Item Two - Under the Double Eagle and Elder Moon

[Scan/copy to include]

Appendix - Item Three - Totem Poles in the Royal BC Museum

[Scan/copy to include]

Appendix - Item Four - Comic Life Example (Cedar: The Tree of Life)





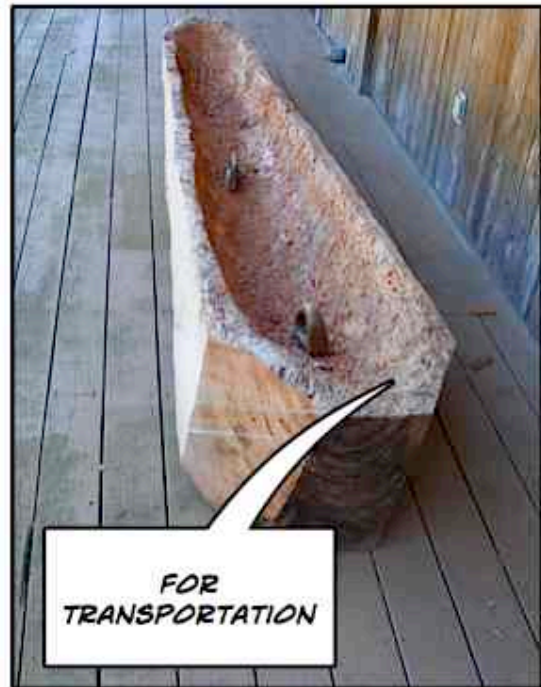
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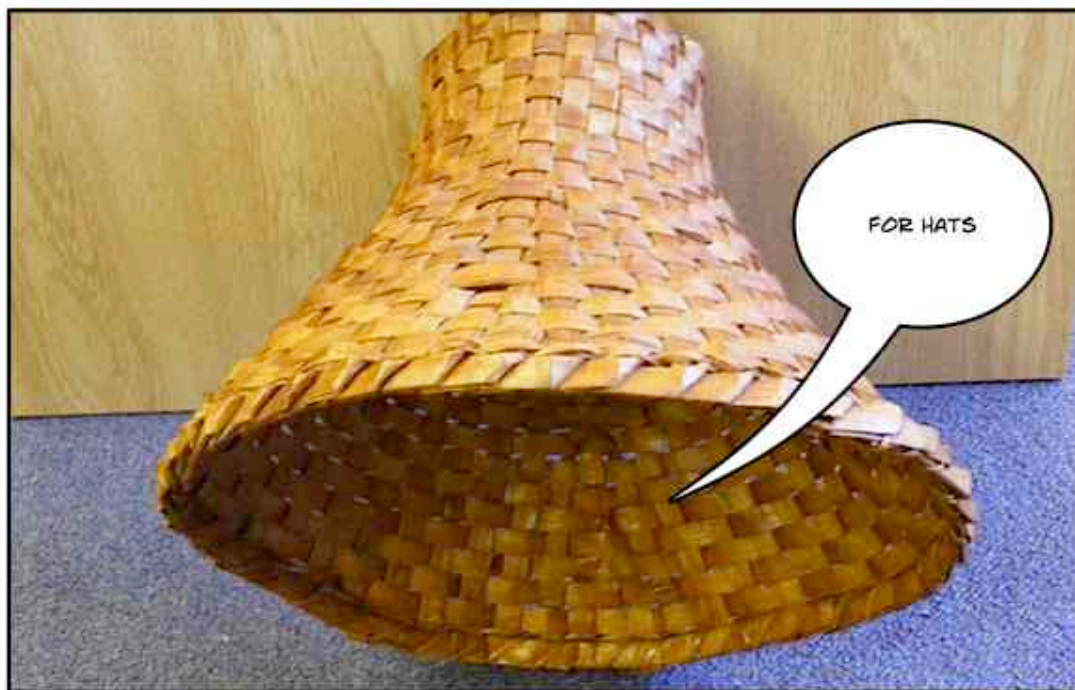


FOR CARRYING
FOOD



FOR
TRANSPORTATION





Insert Powerpoint 1 per page (tools)

Insert Powerpoint - Cedar Nadine and Elaine

Picture Files (on Ab Website for free download) - Scan

**Cedar Tools and Technology (Xaytem), Cedar Harvesting, Awakening Ceremony,
Cleansing Ceremony, Museum of Anthropology, Making Drums, Preparing Wool**

