

**Language Awareness and Cultural  
Activities  
Innu aimun**

**Grades 4 to 6**

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## Introduction

The following activities were designed to facilitate the integration of aspects of the Innu language and culture into regular classroom teaching from grades 4 to 6. Innu is an endangered language; every effort made to call the children's attention to it and make room for it in the classrooms helps. Innu is also an extraordinarily beautiful and complex language that is worth getting to know or know better.

The proposed activities can all be done without the classroom teacher having any previous knowledge of Innu, although it would be highly useful for teachers to read *Into Algonquian* (available through the school) beforehand to get a broad overview of how languages of the Algonquian family, of which Innu is a member, work. The pronunciation of words in Innu is admittedly a big challenge, but students and classroom assistants can help out. The words can also be made available in written form for students to read on their own.

In addition to exposing Innu students and their teachers to some interesting aspects of the language culture, the activities found in the following pages are intended make students and teachers alike better aware of some of the many fine resources available to them at no cost. The activities are matched to Grade 4, 5 and 6 objectives, but can be used at a different grade level in many instances because of the cyclical nature of the bulk of the objectives. Teachers should look at all of the activities and not simply those for their particular grade level.

I hope you and your students are able to find a bit of classroom time to cover aspects of the curriculum from an Innu perspective. I hope above all that you enjoy yourselves while doing it.

Many thanks to Marguerite MacKenzie who fixed the many mistakes and awkward bits in both Innu and English. Any remaining glitches are mine alone.

## Grade 4 Activities

### Science

#### Habitats and Populations

##### *Name that critter!*

Divide the class into two or more different teams. Make sure there are Innu speakers on each team. Project the pictures of local animals on the smart board. The goal is for the students to name as many as possible but they can only score points for animals named in both Innu and English.



In order:

atik <sup>u</sup> , caribou	mashk <sup>u</sup> , bear
uapush, rabbit, hare	kak <sup>u</sup> , porcupine
amishk <sup>u</sup> , beaver	maikan, wolf

Bonus points can be awarded for any other local animals they are able to name in both languages.

### *Little ones*

Language info: Innu uses a diminutive suffix *-iss* to talk about the young of many animals, e.g. *minush* – cat, *minushiss* – kitten. Sometimes the addition of the suffix results in a few sound changes within the word.

Here are a few adult-young pairings to get the students started. Show the class 4 or 5 pairings and ask them how they think Innu creates words to refer to young animals.

Adult		Young	
atim <sup>u</sup>	dog	atimuss	puppy
pishu	lynx	pishiss	lynx cub
maikan	wolf	makaniss	wolf cub
mashk <sup>u</sup>	bear	mashkuss	bear cub
atik <sup>u</sup>	caribou	atikuss	caribou calf

Ask the students to give you words for the young of other animals they know.

### *Poles apart*

In English, tent poles are pretty much tent poles. In Innu, different types of poles have different names.

The ridge pole of a tent is a *tetauan*. The ridge pole may be supported by a pole called and *apashui*. The horizontal pole used for hanging things inside or outside a tent is called an *assikuashk<sup>u</sup>*. The name for this pole can be broken down into two morphemes *assik<sup>u</sup>* (bucket) and *ashk<sup>u</sup>* (stick). See if any of the students can break *assikuashk<sup>u</sup>* down into its parts.



### Sticking around

Innu uses a number of morphemes known as ‘classifiers’ to indicate what things are made of or the form they take. For instance, *-ashku* can be found in many words referring to stick-like objects: *kusseiuashk<sup>u</sup>* (bait stick), *mitshimashkuaikan* (stick used to hold a trap in place), *peikuashk<sup>u</sup>* (one stick-like thing), *takutashk<sup>u</sup>* (at the top of a tree), etc. Here are some Innu words. Print them out and have the students pick out the ones that refer to something sticklike. The translations can be given out after. Alternatively, the students could try to match the definitions with the words as a second activity.

Innu word	Definition
<i>tshinashkushinu</i>	s/he slips accidentally on it (sticklike)
<i>tshishpakau</i>	it is thick
<i>tshinau</i>	it is pointed, sharp
<i>tshishpakashkushiu</i>	it (sticklike) is thick
<i>utamashkuaim<sup>u</sup></i>	s/he hits it with a stick
<i>utamitin</i>	something hits an object or surface
<i>uemashtau</i>	s/he portages around a rapid
<i>uepashkuaim<sup>u</sup></i>	s/he pushes it away with a stick

### Home sweet home

Here are a few animals with the names of the places they live. You could print the Innu words on cards and have the students match animals with habitats.

Animal	Habitat
<i>amishk<sup>u</sup></i> , beaver	<i>uisht</i> , beaver lodge
<i>mashk<sup>u</sup></i> , bear	<i>uatashk<sup>u</sup></i> , bear den
<i>shiship</i> , duck	<i>utshishtun</i> , nest
<i>uapush</i> , rabbit, hare	<i>uatik<sup>u</sup></i> , burrow

### Food chains

#### Eat or be eaten

Here are some animal names. Have the students indicate which ones might eat others on the list.

Innu	English
<i>amishk<sup>u</sup></i>	beaver
<i>mashk<sup>u</sup></i>	bear
<i>shiship</i>	duck
<i>uapush</i>	rabbit, hare
<i>maikan</i>	wolf
<i>apikushish</i>	mouse
<i>shiship</i>	duck
<i>atik<sup>u</sup></i>	caribou
<i>pishu</i>	lynx
<i>namesh</i>	fish
<i>nishk</i>	goose

## On the menu

Here are tasty wilderness offerings. Which animals might enjoy each delicacy?

Innu	English
<i>unan</i>	landlocked salmon
<i>inniminana</i>	blueberries
<i>manitushiss</i>	worm, caterpillar
<i>ushkuai</i>	birch tree
<i>uapush</i>	hare, rabbit
<i>umatshashkuk<sup>u</sup></i>	frog
<i>anik-apakuai</i>	lichen
<i>shashapin</i>	seaweed

## Structural features of plants

### *How many leaves?*

The scientific world classifies some plants by the number of leaves growing together. Innu does as well. The word *nishupemakau* means ‘it has two leaves’. The word *nishtupemakau* means ‘it has three leaves’. How would you say ‘It has four leaves’ in Innu? (*neupemakau*)

### Value fir money

Conifers play an important role in Innu culture. Here are some tree parts in Innu. Ask the students what the parts can be used for. A few possibilities are included here but there are others.

Part	Use
<i>tshishtapakun</i> : branch  needles	flooring in tents, hunting blinds, extra roofing for a hut tea, beer! ( <i>minaikuashikuapui</i> )
<i>pitshuatik</i> <sup>u</sup> : fir gum or resin	sealant for canoes, protection against scurvy, treatment for cuts and burns
<i>innasht-ushkuetu</i> : fir cones	kindling, food (seeds)
<i>utapiukatiapi</i> : fine part of tree roots	baskets, ropes, lashing for canoes
<i>innashtitak</i> <sup>u</sup> : cut fir wood	housing, heating, creating various implements

## Sources of light

*Celestial*

The Innu word *pishim*<sup>u</sup> can mean either sun or moon. Ask the students what needs to be said to distinguish between the two.

*tshishikau-pishim*<sup>u</sup> = sun

*tipishkau-pishim*<sup>u</sup> = moon

Ask the students what *tshishikau* and *tipishkau* mean. (Respectively ‘It is day’ and ‘It is night’).

*Pishim* has yet another meaning. Ask the students if they can find it. If they can't, have them look at a calendar for inspiration; *pishim* also means month.

*Light up my life*

A number Innu words used to talk about sources of light and things that emit light start with *uashte-*. Tell the students that they are going to do a *uashte-* scavenger hunt. They will need to use either the paper or on-line version of the Innu-English dictionary for the hunt.

Here is what they need to find (answers in parentheses):

A word for a light emitting insect (*uashteshish* = firefly)

A word for candlestick and a more modern use of the same word (*uashtenimakan-mishtik*<sup>u</sup> = candlestick and hydro pole)

A word for the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) (*uashtuashkuan*)

A word for flashlight (*uashtenikan*)

### *The rainbow connection*

Different Innu dialects have different words for rainbow. Natuashish uses *pishimuiapi*, which includes *pishim*<sup>u</sup>, the morpheme for sun/moon, + *iapi* (stringlike). So a rainbow would be strings of sun. The word used in Sheshatshiu and Uashat is *uikupishakan*. It probably also means a stringlike thing, with *uikupi* meaning stings of willow bark. The prize-winner has to be the Pessamit word *anakapeshakan*, which is the same as the word for a pair of pants. Ask the students to explain the relationship between a rainbow and a pair of pants.

### *A light sabre by any other name*

Show the students the picture below and ask them what you could call a light sabre in Innu. Have them translate the words they created into English.



## **Sound**

### *Name that tune*

Innu has words to describe a number of very precise sounds. Have the students use either a paper or on-line English-Innu dictionary to find the following Innu words (answers in parentheses):

sound produced by two trees rubbing in the wind (*tshishipuak*<sup>u</sup>)

it is the sound of a rifle shot (*tatueueteu*)

it makes a crackling sound in the direct heat (*tshuekateu*)

s/he, it (anim) makes lapping sounds in the water (*tatueueiakamitau*)

it (anim) makes wing sounds in passing by (*pimueuiatsheu*)

s/he chops and the sound resounds, echoes in the distance, afar (*pashueuekaitsheu*)

s/he moves forward making vocal sounds moving away from the edge of the woods, bush, a wall (*nimitauetam*<sup>u</sup>)

### *Drumming it up*

Here is a link to a series of 5 videos on Innu drums. They cover the importance of drums, the materials needed to make one, how to assemble one, etc. The videos are in Innu with English subtitles. <http://www.nametauinnu.ca/en/culture/tool/detail/43/42>

## **Rocks, minerals and erosion**

### *Rock on*

Rather than distinguish between types of rocks and minerals according to their composition, Innu tends to describe rocks according to their form or appearance. Ask students how this very different way of classifying rocks might have come about.

### *Ashini*

*Ashini* (rock or stone) is not only a common family name in Innu, it is word that has been tweaked morphologically over time and used to name a number of different things. Have the students look up *ashini* in the Innu-English dictionary (paper or online) and note down their favourite creations. Here are a few they may choose:

*ashiniss* - pebble or a .22 bullet (make sure the students notice the diminutive –iss)

*ashinikan* – lead or aluminium foil

*ashinikanapui* – plumbing solder, mercury

*ashinikatashu* – s/he wears a cast

*ashiniu-patshuian* - asbestos

## **Health**

### **Self care**

#### *Head and shoulders*

Have the students provide the Innu words for as many of the body parts listed below as possible. Note that in Innu body parts are almost always named in the possessive, e.g. ‘his or her nose’ rather than just ‘nose’. If the students name their own body parts or yours, the beginning of the words they give will change. Note additionally that some body parts that are very easy to name in English are rarely named and little known in Innu.



head - ushtikuan

hair - pishkueun

eye - ussishik"

ear – uitukai, utukai

nose – ushkut, ushkut, ussun

mouth - utun

neck - ukueiau

shoulder - utitiman

chest - ushkassikan

stomach - utai

back - ushpishkun

arm - ushpitun

waist - apitunu

elbow - utushkan

hip - upitshikaikan

wrist - ukunititshi

hand - utitshi

finger – ninikanititshan, ninititshan

thumb –mitshitin, utuakan,

buttocks - mitshishkapeu

thigh - upuam

knee –uitshikun, utshikun

leg - ushkat

shin - ushekatan

calf - utashtan(a)

ankle – uakun, ukun

foot - ushit

heel - ututan

toe – ninitshishitan, ninitshikanashtan

## Physical growth and development

### Keeping busy

Innu lifestyles have changed dramatically over the past 30 to 40 years as more and more families have moved into permanent homes and stopped spending part of the year in the bush. It would be interesting for students to ask their grandparents about how they spent their days at the same age. When did they get up in the morning? What did they do in the course of the day? When did they eat? What did they eat? When did they go to bed? What did they do for fun? The students can

compare their current activity level with that of their grandparents' generation and draw conclusions about what the changes have meant for health and well-being.

### *Walking for well-being*

Recently, some Innu have done very impressive walks to raise awareness about different issues. Ask the students to name them if they can or look them up if they don't know. They should be able to find Giant (Michel Andrew) from Sheshatshui. He walked some 4,000 kilometres from Sheshatshui to Natuashish in 2011. Stanley Volland, a surgeon from Pessamit, did several walks visiting a series of Innu and other Aboriginal communities. The students may wish to trace the routes taken by each. There is also a book available documenting Giant's walk.

### *Burning calories*

As part of the Idle No More movement a group of Cree youth walked from Whapmagoostui to Ottawa in the winter of 2013. How far did they walk? How many calories did they likely burn every day of their trip? What would be good foods to eat on such a trip, especially if you were living largely off the land?

## **Social Studies**

### **Community location and size**

The students should be introduced to the wonderful *Pepamuteiati Nitassinat* (As We Walk Across Our Land) website (<http://www.innuplaces.ca/index.php?lang=en>). A number of activities can be done using the website

### *Here today, gone tomorrow*

The students can use the map look at all the place names that can be found near their community. Do they know any of these names? Do their parents and grandparents know of these places? What might happen when there is no one left who knows what these places are called and what happened there is the past?

### *What is in a name?*

The students can use the place names index to explore how places are named in Innu. They will likely see that places tend to be named for things that happened there. There is a section on the website where this is discussed: <http://www.innuplaces.ca/geographic.php?lang=en>.

### *Innu vs. English*

What is the Innu name for the following places?

Mealy Mountains

Red Wine Mountains

Lake Melville

North West River

Rigolet

Davis Inlet

### *Pet names*

Have the students pick their favourite place name. Here is mine! *Shapatish kautunishtikuanatak utut* (Where John Baptist Was Bulging The Canoe Canvas With his Head)

### *Name your own place!*

Have the students pick a spot in or around the community and create their own Innu name for it. They could create a name on the basis of an event that happened there or according to a physical feature... or for any reason they wish. They can translate their creations for you.

### *Time travel*

Students can compare water vs. road distances between communities and then can calculate travel times for cars, motor boats and canoes. They can also calculate how long it would take to walk certain distances during the winter.

## **Art**

### **Value and role of the arts in creating and reflecting culture**

#### *A trip to the art gallery*

No time or money to take your students on a trip? No problem. Use your smart board and this link to bring the gallery to the students.

[http://www.tipatshimuna.ca/1200\\_e.php](http://www.tipatshimuna.ca/1200_e.php)

Here you will find an amazingly rich collection to explore with your students. There are explanations in Innu with English transcriptions. This is a great site to take a field trip to from the comfort of the classroom. This site is also useful for Social Studies activities. The booklet *Nitassinan: Our Innu Stories*, which contains many activities, is available in the Labrador Innu schools.

## Grade 5

### Science

#### Skeletal System

##### *A bone to pick*

Animal bones are of importance to the Innu as a food source and for various spiritual practices. Animal bones are named by adding the animal name to the word for bone (*ushkan*) and tweaking things a bit phonologically, e.g. *ushkanak<sup>u</sup>* (porcupine bone) = *ushkan* + *kak<sup>u</sup>*. Here are some bone names. Show the students the Innu words and ask them to match them to the right animal.

Innu	English
<i>ushkan-muak<sup>u</sup></i>	loon bone
<i>ushkan-mush</i>	moose bone
<i>ushkanamesh</i>	fish bone
<i>ushkanamishk<sup>u</sup></i>	beaver bone
<i>ushkanapishtan</i>	marten bone
<i>ushkanapishu</i>	lynx bone
<i>ushkanapush</i>	hare, rabbit bone
<i>ushkanashk<sup>u</sup></i>	bear bone
<i>ushkanatik<sup>u</sup></i>	caribou bone
<i>ushkanatshakash</i>	mink bone
<i>ushkanatsheshu</i>	fox bone
<i>ushkanatshik<sup>u</sup></i>	seal, otter bone
<i>ushkanineu</i>	grouse, partridge bone
<i>ushkaniss</i>	goose bone
<i>ushkanitshashk<sup>u</sup></i>	muskrat bone

##### *Guess what?*

Animal bones have traditionally been used for divination purposes (predicting the future). To determine where game might be, hunters will put the scapula (shoulder blade) of an animal (caribou, hare, porcupine, etc.) in a fire and then use the charring and cracking patterns as a guide to where to find game.

Have the students find out how to say scapula in Innu? (The word is in the dictionary. *Utinikan* = shoulder blade with or without meat and *utinikanikan* is the dried shoulder blade.)

You can also find out if anyone in the community still uses this form of divination (scapulimancy).

#### Digestive and excretory system

##### *Matshishkapeu*

*Matshishkapeu* is the Fart Man, the Innu spirit of the anus. Really!! Fart Man tends to ‘speak’ most when the Innu are off camping in the bush and generally having a good time. When someone farts, Fart Man has spoken and his ‘words’ need to be ‘translated’, usually in a very humorous manner.

Ask your students if they know about *Matshishkapeu*. If they don’t, send them off to talk to their parents or grandparents about him.

Fart Man is a very powerful spirit. Control of the sphincter is gives you a lot of leverage! Proof of Fart Man's power can be found in the following tale collected by Peter Armitage from Greg Penashue of Sheshatshiu. (Armitage, P. (1990). Religious ideology among the Innu of Eastern Quebec and Labrador *Land Use and Occupancy Among the Innu of Utshimassit and Sheshatshit* , Report prepared for the Innu Nation, Sheshatshit, Nitassinan. Sheshatshiu: Innu Nation.)

Once, long ago, the Master of the Caribou was stingy and would not give caribou to the Innu who started to starve as a result. Through the medium of the shaking tent, the Innu asked Matshishkapeu to assist them. The latter then went to the Caribou Master and asked him to give caribou to the Innu. The Caribou Master refused. Matshishkapeu then told him that if he did not give caribou to the Innu, he would cause some bodily affliction to befall him. Still the Caribou Master would not give caribou to the Innu. So Matshishkapeu made him constipated; so much so, in fact that he was in danger of dying. He couldn't fart or shit. Finally, he acceded to the Fart Man's request to provide caribou to the Innu, and as a result, was relieved of his constipation. This explains why the Fart Man is the most powerful of all Innu spirits, even more powerful than the Caribou Master.

### Maintaining a healthy body

#### Take that!

Innu people have traditionally made use of a variety of local plants to treat illnesses and stay in shape. Here are some plants and their uses to share with students. The students can ask their grandparents about other medicinal plants they may know of.

Innu	English	Uses
innasht	fir	Gum – to treat cuts and burns Sap – drink for a chest cold Needles and branches – boiled to treat stomach ache Cones – boiled to fight nausea Bark – part of a compound used to relieve pain Roots – to treat a chest cold or for pain relief
atikupemak <sup>u</sup>	dwarf birch	Twigs (chewed) –to stop bleeding Leaves and stems – boiled to make a weight-loss tea
ushkuai	paper birch	Leaves (chewed) – to extract poison from wasp stings Buds – used in ointment Wood – dry, rotten wood used to make baby powder Inner bark – for teething pain Outer bark – used as a cast for a broken arm or leg
shashakuminanakashi	bunchberry	Whole plant – boiled and drunk for rheumatism
mîkuâpemuk <sup>u</sup>	red-osier dogwood	Whole plant - Steeped and used for diarrhoea or chewed and used to treat poison ivy Bark – infused and used to treat eye problems Roots – made into tea used to treat dizziness
uteiminanakashi	wild strawberry	Fruit – heart medicine
kakatshiminakashi	juniper	Fruit – used to treat ulcers Inner bark – used to treat diabetes Bark - boiled into a jelly and used to treat boils Twigs and leaves – boiled to make a treatment for asthma

Students could collect various plants that have traditionally played a medicinal role in their culture. The plants could be dried, labelled in Innu and English and displayed in the school.

### Properties of materials

#### *A class act*

One of the Grade 4 activities makes reference to the fact that Innu uses classifiers to indicate what things are made out of or look like. This is a good opportunity to explore Innu classifiers in more detail.

Here are some of the classifiers used in Innu:

- ashku*- for sticklike things, e.g. *ashitashkuapikateu* = it is tied to a sticklike object
- apishk* – for mineral, metal, glass objects, e.g. *akuakuapishkau* = it (mineral) is rusty
- apek* – for stringlike things, e.g. *mashkapekan* = it (stringlike) is misshapen
- ek* – for sheetlike things, e. g. *uinekan* = it (sheetlike thing) stinks, is soiled
- pe* – for liquids, e.g. *shutshipetatau* = s/he spills it (liquid) by accidentally overturning it

Here are some pictures of Innu camps. Ask the students to name as many things as they can and, where possible, indicate where classifiers could be used.





### Sources of materials in objects

#### *Table of contents*

Here are some traditional Innu objects. Have the students name them and the materials that go into them in Innu. The students will likely need to use a dictionary or seek help from elders for some of the words.



The objects are in order:

*innikueu* – tea doll

*ashamat* – snowshoes

*uashuakanashk*<sup>u</sup> - leister (fish spear)

*utapanashk<sup>u</sup>/shumin-utapanashk<sup>u</sup>* – toboggan  
*tapaikan* – cup and pin game

## Forces and their effects

### Hand or foot?

When it comes to people acting on things, Innu makes more subtle distinctions than English. For instance, when someone flattens something out, Innu can indicate whether the flattening was done by hand (*papatshinam<sup>u</sup>*) or by foot (*papatshishkam<sup>u</sup>*). The distinction is made by using separate morphemes: *-in-* for things done by hand and *-ishk-* for things done by foot (or with the body).

Here are some activities. Show the students the Innu words and ask them to determine whether the activities are done by hand or by foot.

Innu	English
<i>uatshinam<sup>u</sup></i>	s/he bends it by hand
<i>mikupatshineu</i>	s/he washes it by hand
<i>kushkam<sup>u</sup></i>	s/he knocks it down, over with the body or feet
<i>passineu</i>	s/he breaks it (anim, thread) by hand
<i>kuneu</i>	s/he knocks it (anim) down, over by hand
<i>passishkam<sup>u</sup></i>	s/he breaks it (cord) with her/his weight or feet
<i>akauapineu</i>	s/he covers someone's eyes with her/his hands
<i>nekaushkam<sup>u</sup></i>	s/he covers it with sand, gets sand on it with the body or feet

### Making things happen

Here is a grammatical puzzle for the students to solve. You should give them the following words along with their English translations.

Innu	English
<i>shishinikutin</i>	it rubs against an object, a surface
<i>shishinikutitau</i>	s/he causes it to rub against an object, a surface
<i>niueiau</i>	it is frayed
<i>niuetitau</i>	s/he causes it to become frayed
<i>tshinau</i>	it is sharp
<i>tshinitau</i>	s/he sharpens it, makes it sharp
<i>uinipau</i>	it is black
<i>uinipitau</i>	s/he blackens it, makes it black
<i>niuteshinu</i>	it deflates
<i>niutetitau</i>	s/he makes it deflate
<i>anakassiu</i>	it is wide
<i>anakassitau</i>	s/he widens it (makes it wide)
<i>shakassiu</i>	it is water or windproof
<i>shakassitau</i>	s/he makes it water or windproof

<i>uapau</i>	it is white
?	s/he makes it white
<i>nussiu</i>	it is soft
?	

Answers: *uapitau*, *nussitau*

## Describing the weather

### *Both sides now*

Innu distinguishes many of the same types of clouds as English and makes additional distinctions. Here are some of terms. The students can draw or photograph the cloud formations referred to.

<b>Innu</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>shashipishkashu</i>	it is cirrus or stratus
<i>uauapatshu</i>	it is cumulus
<i>tshishiteushk<sup>u</sup></i>	cloud which produces heat lightning
<i>papetikuashu</i>	it (cloud) is fleecy, cotton-like

## Weather related products

### *Baby, it's cold outside*

The need to stay warm, dry and mobile in an inhospitable climate has resulted in a number of Innu innovations. Here are some materials used for weather protection. Have the students translate the Innu words into English and then explore the uses of the materials. They should also be able to add other resources to the list by consulting with elders:

<b>Innu</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Uses</b>
<i>kauashik<sup>u</sup></i>	spruce branches	Underflooring
<i>minashkuau-pitshu</i>	spruce gum	Caulking, waterproofing
<i>mishtikuai</i> <i>atikuian</i>	caribou hide	Clothing (coats, mitts, footwear); tent covers

## Health

### Daily physical activities

#### *Just do it!*

Have the students list all of their daily activities and then see how many they can name in Innu. Make a list of those activities they have trouble naming in Innu and have the students check to see if they can find Innu terms in the dictionary. For the terms they can't find, ask them to invent an Innu word for the activity.

### Nutrition

#### *Food for thought*

Have the students keep a record of what they eat in the course of a week. As in the previous activity, have the students name as many foods as possible in Innu. The list of unknown words might be shortened through the use of a dictionary. Foods that seem to have no equivalent in Innu can be given names by the students.

It might be interesting to talk with the students about why certain types of food don't have well-known Innu names.

### ***Good eats***

Many traditional Innu foods are much healthier to eat than processed food from the store. Have students look up nutritional comparisons of wild meat (venison, fish, game birds) and farm-raised equivalents. They should find that wild meat is far less fatty and contains lower levels of cholesterol.

Here is a useful website with an excellent PDF download:

[http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/inuit\\_traditional.pdf](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/inuit_traditional.pdf)

### **Injury prevention and safety**

#### ***Tools of the trade***

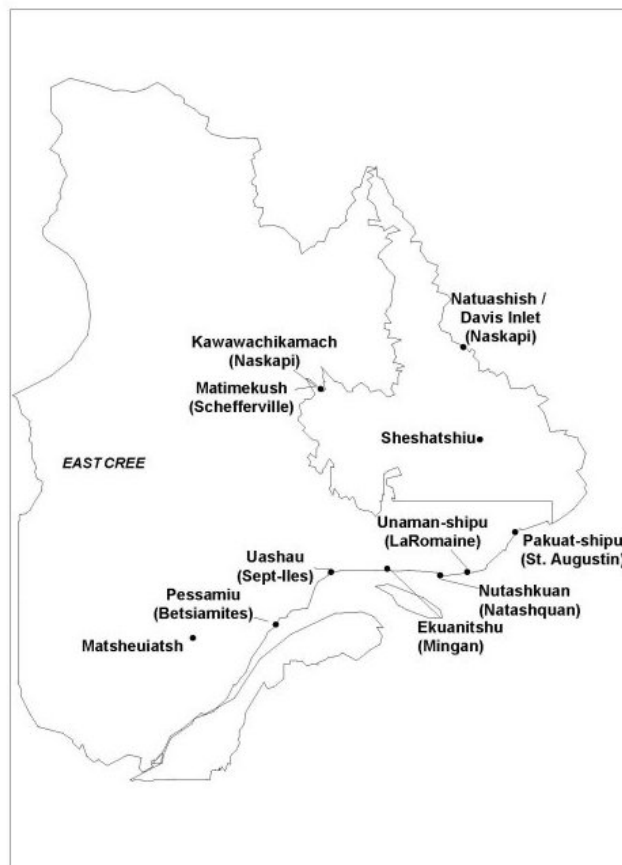
Have the students make a list of equipment needed to go hunting or fishing. See how many of the items they can name in Innu. Are there items they know in Innu but not in English?

## **Social Studies**

### **Geographic setting of Newfoundland and Labrador in relation to Canada**

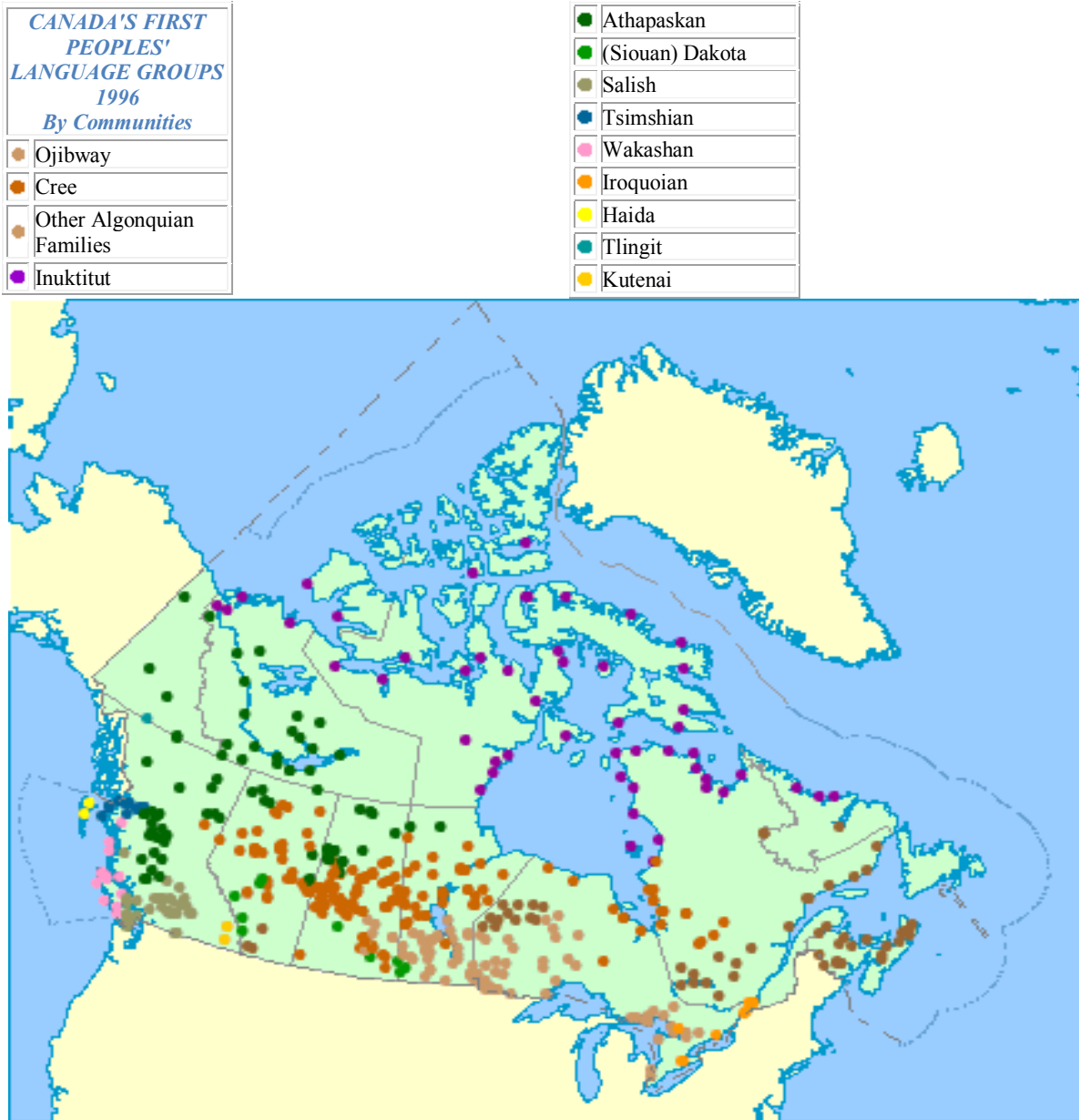
#### ***You'll never walk alone***

See how many Innu communities the students can name. Next have them try to situate the communities on a map showing Quebec and Labrador.



### *Kissing cousins*

Ask the students who their closest Aboriginal relatives are. The following map may prove useful. Cree, Ojibwe and the other Algonquian languages are part of the same language family as Innu. The other language groups are not related to Innu.



Borrowed from Canada's First Peoples website:

[http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp\\_groups/fp\\_groups\\_languages.html](http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_groups/fp_groups_languages.html)

### *Pepamuteiati nitassinat*

Here is a wonderful website included in the Grade 4 activities:

<http://www.innuplaces.ca/aboutPlaceNames.php>

Use your smart board to show your students the map. Check out the links for locations close to your community and see if the students know any of them. Spend some time looking at how the Innu names are arrived at.

In the multimedia section, there are audio clips from young people. Have your students listen to them and translate them for you.

There are also interesting video clips (no sound) that show various locations.

### **First peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador**

#### *The Beothuk*

The students should learn about the Beothuk people who lived in Newfoundland until going extinct in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. No one knows for sure, but the Beothuk might have been distant Algonquian relatives of the Innu.

Here is a link to find additional information: <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/aboriginal/beothuk.html>

## **Art**

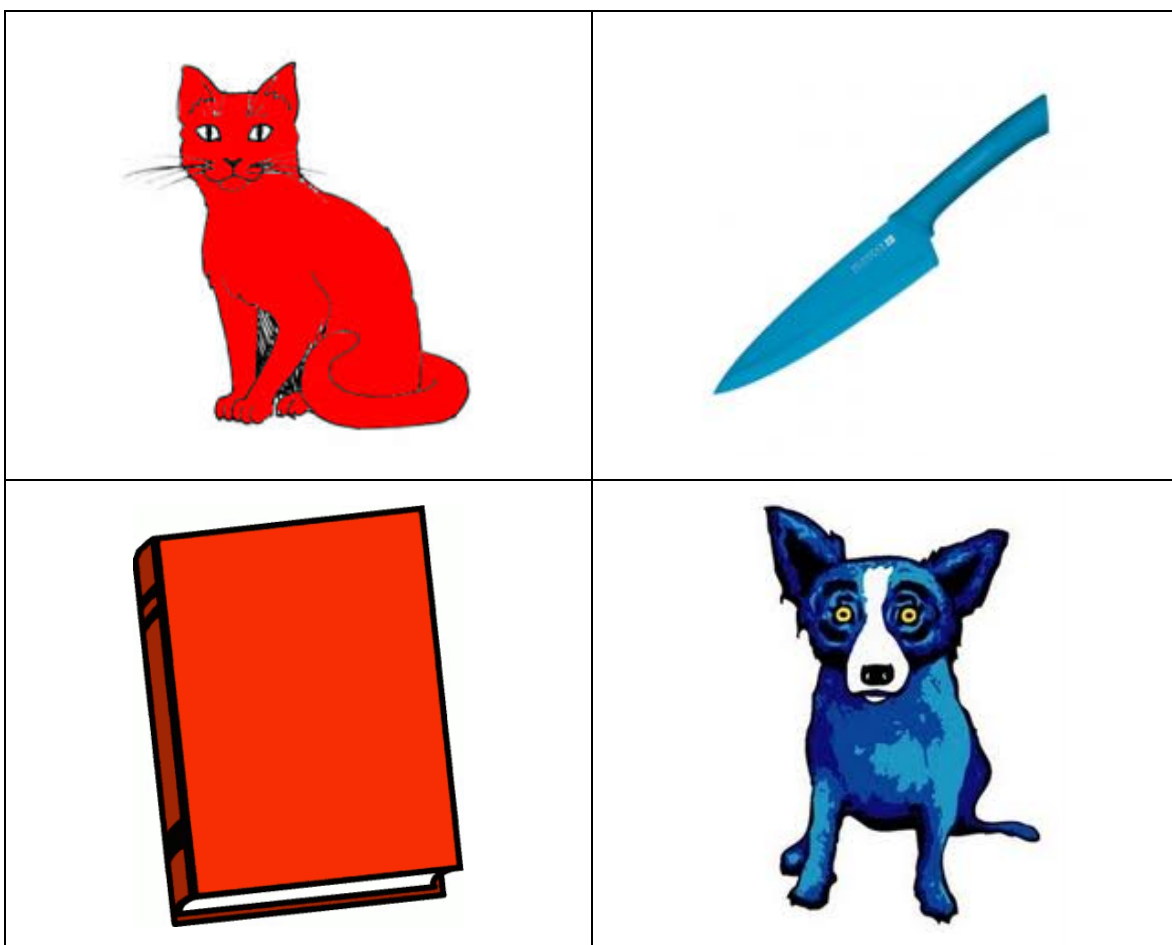
### **Colours**

#### *Bringing colours to life*

Innu has no adjectives per se. Most adjective-like words, including colours are expressed as verbs. In short, you can't simply say 'red'; you have to indicate that something is red. In an added twist, as soon as you say something is red, you have to indicate whether that something (or someone) is animate or inanimate. So, not only are colours expressed through verbs, but each colour verb expressed has to show animate or inanimate gender. Strange for English speakers but true!

The students in your class are unlikely to know the explicit 'rules' about colours, verbs and gender, but, as speakers of Innu, they are sensitive to gender distinctions. For proof, you can have them match up the following Innu words with the pictures provided below.

Mikuau	It (inanimate) is red.
Mikushiu	It (animate) is red.
Uasheshkunau	It (inanimate) is blue.
Uasheshkunishiu	It (animate) is blue.



### 50 shades of ...

Innu offers quite good coverage of shades of different colours. Here are a few shades of red. You could have your students draw and colour things to match the Innu words (shade and gender!).

Innu	English
<i>minapu-mikuau</i>	it is bright red (inanimate)
<i>miku-mitshinanushu</i>	it is pinky red (animate or inanimate)
<i>matshi-mikushiu</i>	it is orangy-red (animate)
<i>miku-tshishtemauapun</i>	it is reddish-brown (inanimate)
<i>paikassi-mikushiu</i>	it is scarlet red (animate)
<i>ututshi-mikushiu</i>	it is burgundy red (animate)

## Grade 6 Science

### Classification scheme for living things

#### *Fair or fowl?\**

Innu culture traditionally classifies animals in quite a different way than European culture. The Innu distinguish between domestic animals (usually introduced by Europeans) and wild animals (local). The animals of the wild group are further divided up into four-legged, waterfowl, birds, fish and insects.

Ask the students why they think Innu people separate waterfowl from other types of birds?

#### *My kingdom for a caribou\**

In a major departure from the system of European classification, traditional Innu culture holds that there are different animal kingdoms (**tipentamun**) which are ruled by an animal spirit known as the animal master. The Innu words for the animal master are *utshimau* (master), *aueshish-utshimau* (animal master) or *katipenitak* (controller). Ask the students which term is used locally. If they don't know, have them speak to an elder who hunts.

#### *Mastery\**

In some Innu communities, different animals have their own masters. Show the students the Innu words for the different animal master below (from the community of La Romaine) and have them tell you which animal is involved in each case.

Innu	English
papakashtshihk <sup>u</sup>	master of the caribou
kakuapeu	master of porcupine
uapishtan-napeu	master of marten
nisk-napeu	master of geese
uhuapeu	master of owls
uapineu-napeu	master of partridge
mashkuapeu	master of bears
amishkuapeu	master of beavers

(\*Information for these activities taken from Armitage, P. (1990). Religious ideology among the Innu of Eastern Quebec and Labrador *Land Use and Occupancy Among the Innu of Utshimassit and Sheshatshit*, Report prepared for the Innu Nation, Sheshatshit, Nitassinan. Sheshatshiu: Innu Nation.)

#### *Power play\**

There is some discussion about which animal masters are the most powerful. Ask the students to find out which are considered to be at the top of the hierarchy in their community.

#### *Other worldly\**

Alongside the animal spirits, other spirits can be found. These include *Mishtapeu*, *Matshishkapeu*, *Tshiuetinush*, *Meminiteu*, *Atshen*, *Katshimetssheshuat*, *Tshishikunapeu*, *Memekueshu* and *Utshakanue*. Send your students off with these names to see what they can find out. Below is a

copy of information provided in Armitage (1990). For more on *Matshishkapeu* (Fart Man!), check out the Fart Man activity in Grade 5.

Name	Role
<i>Mishtapeu</i>	A class of giant, generally benevolent beings, referred to respectfully as "grandfather or grandmother". Normally, they reside in another world called <i>Tshishtashkamuk'</i> , and only visit the world of the Innu in times of need.
<i>Matshishkapeu</i>	The "Fart Man" who is both a powerful Innu spirit and source of great amusement on the frequent occasions in the country when he communicates with the Innu.
<i>Tshiuetinuish</i>	The weather spirit, the spirit of the north wind
<i>Meminiteu</i>	A class of cannibal monsters of human proportions who appear frequently in the mythological record and who normally reside on <i>Tshishtashkamuk'</i> where they wage constant war with the <i>Mishtapeuat</i> .
<i>Atshen</i>	A class of giant beings who were once human but were transformed into cannibals with no lips and hair on their hearts after they consumed human flesh.
<i>Katshimetsheshuat</i>	Spirit beings seen or heard in the dark or fog, that throw stones at the tents, steal camp belongings, and in former times, stole women as well.
<i>Tshishikunapeu</i>	The weather watcher; the spirit of the 'Y' tent post who in one myth rescues Innu women from <i>Anikapeu</i> .
<i>Memekueshu</i>	Spirit beings that live in caves.
<i>Utshakanue</i>	Master of the caribou's tail.

## Vertebrates and Invertebrates

### *No bones about it*

A discussion of vertebrates and invertebrates would be an ideal moment to invite a local hunter into the classroom to show the students animal skeletons and to teach them the names of the bones and other parts in Innu.

## Adaptation and natural selection

### *Caribou in question*

This would be an excellent opportunity to have the students work on a project of local interest. Various levels of government and the Innu of Quebec and Labrador are currently facing off over the issue of protecting caribou herds. Have your students find out what the different positions are regarding the different herds. Ask them to say what they think should be done.

## Electricity

### *A bolt from the blue*

Ask your students for the Innu word for electricity (*nanimissiu-ishkuteu*). Ask them to tell you what words they recognize in the two parts of this compound word (*nanimissiu* = thunder and lightning and *ishkuteu* = fire)

### *Getting by without*

The best way of conserving electricity is not using it at all. Have your students document how Innu people living on the land traditionally provided heat and light for themselves.

### **Lift and wing shape**

#### *Winging it*

This is an excellent opportunity for students to examine wings from geese, ducks, grouse and other game birds. Local hunters should be able to provide various wings. They could also name the different parts for the students. If a hunter can't be found to name the different wings, use the English-Innu dictionary.

### *Flight patterns*

Send students out with a video recorder to capture the flight of different birds. They could then describe what the flight of each bird looks like.

### **Earth, moon, sun**

#### *New moon*

Ask the students how to say 'new moon' in Innu. If they don't know, have them look it up. What else does the word for *It (the moon) is new* mean?

### **Stars and constellations**

#### *Twinkle, twinkle*

Ask students what the North Star is called in Innu. If they don't know, have them look it up (*tshiuetinitshekatak<sup>u</sup>*). Do the same for morning star (*uapanitshekatak<sup>u</sup>*). Ask them which part of each word means 'star'.

Ask them where they would look in the sky to find the *mishta-utshekatak<sup>u</sup>*.

## **Health**

### **Self care**

#### *Different drummer*

Drumming might be very good for your health. Have students research some of the reported benefits of traditional drumming and how drumming is used for healing in different Aboriginal communities.

### **Nutrition**

#### *Locavore in Labrador?*

The not-too-distant ancestors of your students lived exclusively off the land in Labrador. Have your students find out what they ate. Could these same foods still be eaten today? If a local botanist could be found, the students could go out into the bush in the fall and harvest a meal. Here is a very useful website with a downloadable PDF:

[http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/inuit\\_traditional.pdf](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/inuit_traditional.pdf)

## Social Studies

### Expressions of Culture

#### *Innu Idol*

Have the students name as many Innu singers, groups as they can. Separate them into groups and have them go onto Youtube and select their favourite performance in Innu. Each group can show the class its choice and the class as a whole can select an overall winner.

#### *Words in stone*

Ask the students to name as many Aboriginal writers as they can. If they struggle (and they may), you can help them out.

Here is an address site (with downloadable PDF) to help you out:

<http://curriculum.org/storage/30/1278480166aboriginal.pdf>

Here is another useful address, the CBC Our Story – Canadian Aboriginal Writing and Arts Challenge winners' page:

<http://www.our-story.ca/wc/winners-gallery>

Encouraging your students to read and write is always a good thing. You could have your own writing challenge with prizes!

Finally, here is a site with stories written by Innu youth from the same communities as the students:

[http://www.tipatshimuna.ca/1420\\_e.php](http://www.tipatshimuna.ca/1420_e.php)

### World Issues

#### *Use it or lose it*

Aboriginal language endangerment is a very serious issue in Canada and elsewhere around the world. Use your smart board to show the students UNESCO's map of endangered languages. You can show them the Canadian situation and the situation in other countries as well.

<http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/en/atlasmap.html>

There are many activities that can be done by students using the UNESCO map. The students can learn the names of the various Aboriginal languages of Canada and the US. They can also discover the languages of other Aboriginal peoples elsewhere in the world.

#### *Brothers in words*

Innu students are not always aware of the strong similarities that exist between languages of the Algonquian family. So that they increase their awareness of the similarities that can be found, have them search for the Cree and Ojibwe words for some common things and animals. Here are a few they can try:

wolf, duck, goose, knife, spoon, cup, dog, rifle, drum, to sleep, to eat, to drink, to dance

Here are some possible dictionary links:

Innu : <http://innu-aimun.ca/dictionary/words>

East Cree : <http://www.eastcree.org/cree/en/dictionary/>

Ojibwe: <http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/>

## Art

### Art concepts

#### *Getting to know you*

The students might not know many Innu artists. Here is a site they can explore to find out a bit more: [http://www.tipatshimuna.ca/1440\\_e.php](http://www.tipatshimuna.ca/1440_e.php)

### Construction skills

#### *A bit campy*

The end of Grade 6 would be a good time to take the students out on the land with some elders and have them put up a traditional Innu tent. They could learn the names of the various poles from the elders. Once the tent is up, they could have a storytelling session ... and, with luck, Fart Man might make his presence known.