

# Xáay ka Laax

# Yellow and Red Cedar

**Grade Levels K-2**

## **Cultural Significance**

For hundreds of years, the ocean and the forest have provided life sustaining resources for the Tlingit and Haida people of Southeast Alaska. Using red and yellow cedar trees they made their homes, canoes, clothing, tools, dishes, baskets and monument poles. Today, Tlingit and Haida people continue these traditions, holding deep respect for the cedar and the gifts that it provides to sustain and enrich peoples' lives.

## **Elder/Culture Bearer**

An Elder or Culture Bearer will accompany the students in the forest, using traditional words to address a cedar tree, telling what it is needed for and thanking it for its use. An Elder or Culture Bearer could also be the storyteller for the Haida story about a woodpecker.

## **Overview**

**In lesson #1, Let's Learn about Cedar Trees,** students accompany an Elder or Culture Bearer on a walk into the forest to look for a cedar tree. Students can hear an Elder use the traditional words to address the tree, telling how it will be used in the classroom and thanking it for its use. The needles, bark and cones will be part of a classroom Forest Center, the focal point for continuing lessons in this unit and others relating to the trees of Southeast Alaska. (Spruce, hemlock, alder/cottonwood) Students learn the names for parts of a cedar tree by using a "Feely Box" to touch and identify them. Word cards for these parts will be placed on a tree model in the Forest Center.

**In Lesson #2, Let's Gather Cedar Bark,** students interview an Elder to learn how cedar bark is gathered. They make a field trip to observe the gathering of cedar bark. When they return to the classroom they weave a paper bag basket or a paper mat.

**In Lesson #3, Let's Learn about Weaving,** students learn about traditional weaving from a visiting weaver and practice weaving with paper.

**In Lesson #4, Here is our Forest,** students create a mural to illustrate the components of a forest ecosystem.

A series of elementary level thematic units featuring Tlingit language, culture and history were developed in Juneau, Alaska in 2004-6. The project was funded by two grants from the U.S. Department of Education, awarded to the Sealaska Heritage Institute (Boosting Academic Achievement: Tlingit Language Immersion Program, grant #92-0081844) and the Juneau School District (Building on Excellence, grant #S356AD30001).

Lessons and units were written by a team of teachers and specialists led by Nancy Douglas, Elementary Cultural Curriculum Coordinator, Juneau School District. The team included Juneau teachers Kitty Eddy, Shgen George, Kathy Nielson, Hans Chester and Rocky Eddy, and SHI language team members Linda Belarde, Yarrow Vaara, David Katzeek, John Marks, Mary Foletti, Rose Natkong and Jessica Chester. Curriculum consultants Julie Folta and Toni Mallott assisted and Annie Calkins edited the lessons and units.

Lessons were field tested in Juneau classrooms in 2005-6.

All units are available online at [sealaskaheritage.org](http://sealaskaheritage.org).





**In Lesson #5**, Trees Make Containers, students make a model of a traditional bent-wood box and decorate it with clan symbols.

## **Alaska State Standards**

### **English/Language Arts**

A5) Revise, edit, and publish own writing, as appropriate.

E1) Use information, both oral and written, and literature to understand self and others.

### **Mathematics**

E2) Use math in daily life.

### **Science**

A12) Distinguish patterns of similarity and differences in the living world in order to understand the diversity of life.

B1) Use the processes of science including observing, classifying, measuring, interpreting data, inferring, communicating, hypothesizing, predicting, and experimenting.

### **Art**

B1) Recognize Alaska Native cultures and their art.

### **Cultural Standards**

D1) Acquire in-depth cultural knowledge through active participation and meaningful interaction with Elders.

E1) Recognize and build upon the inter-relationships that exist among the spiritual, natural and human realms in the world around them.

E2) Understand the ecology and geography of the bioregion they inhabit.

## **Lesson #1**

# **Let's Learn About Cedar Trees**

---

### **Objectives**

Students:

- Learn the names for the parts of a tree in Lingít and English
- Practice the traditional words for addressing and thanking a cedar tree

### **Time**

60 minutes

### **Materials**

- Feely Box (see instructions for making in Resources)
- Word cards for tree parts in Lingít and English
- Tree model pattern for the Forest Center



# Yellow and Red Cedar

## Vocabulary

### Lingít

*teey woodí*  
*gítgaa*  
*at looní*  
*s'óos'ani*  
*a t'áni*  
*xaat*  
*kasix'áx'*  
*kalix'ilx'*  
*kali x'wal' shani*  
*aas kwáani*

### English

cedar bark  
needles  
bark  
cones  
branches  
roots  
rough  
smooth  
soft - fluffy  
tree people (spirit of the trees)

## Lingít Phrases

<i>Xáay aasí gaa kuxtooshee.</i>	Let's find a cedar tree
<i>Kook toodei nashí.</i>	Put your hand in the box
<i>Daakw aa sá jee i dinook?</i>	What do you feel?
<i>Kasix'áx' yáx gé jee idinook?</i>	Does it feel rough?
<i>kalix'ilx' yáx gé jee idinook?</i>	Does it feel smooth?
<i>Kalix'wal' shani yax gé jee idinook?</i>	Does it feel soft?
<i>(At looni) jee xdinook.</i>	I feel bark.
<i>(Kasix'áx') áwé.</i>	It is (rough).

## Activity #1

### Let's find a cedar tree

Walk with an Elder or Culture Bearer to a nearby forest area to find a cedar tree. Ask the Elder to use the traditional words for addressing the tree, telling the tree what is needed and how it will be used by the students. (needles, bark, cones for learning about the tree). Ask the Elder to teach the students the traditional Lingít words to thank the tree for its parts.

## Activity #2

### Guess the tree part

#### Teacher preparation

Using the pattern from the Resources, make a Feely Box with a cardboard box to use in your classroom. Make a tree model from the pattern (see Resources) to display the word cards.

#### Activity

When you return to the meeting area in your classroom, as children are putting away their coats and gathering around you, put the needles into the Feely Box. Ask one child to feel (without looking) and identify the tree part. Show the children the picture/word cards in English and Lingít. Take the needles out and place them next to the card. Do the same for each of the other tree parts. When you have finished, put the picture/word cards in their matching places on the tree model in the classroom Forest Center.



## Assessment

Observe students for signs of respectful behavior while listening to an Elder address and thank a tree in the traditional way.

Observe student participation as they identify the parts of a cedar tree and practice the names in English and Lingít. Record their language mastery on a simple checklist.

## Reference Materials and Websites

- *Cedar*, by Hilary Stewart, University of Washington Press, 1995, ISBN 0295974486
- Queen Charlotte Island Readers: The Weavers, <http://www.educ.ubc.ca/first.html>

## Optional Extension Activities

Continue using the Forest Center throughout this unit, adding student artwork, photographs, games, historical photographs of cedar trees used by Southeast carvers etc.

## Lesson #2 Let's Gather Cedar Bark

### Objectives

Students:

- Learn how to identify the inner bark layer used for weaving cedar baskets, mats and hats
- Learn the Lingít words and phrases that pertain to cedar trees and weaving

### Time

45 minutes

### Materials

- Bark Activity Pages (1 per student)
- Study prints
- Real cedar bark sample(s)



### Vocabulary

#### Lingít

*aas k'eeyi*  
*atu.eetí*  
*at looní*  
*at láx'i*  
*lítáa*  
*at katáagu*  
*kákw*  
*nadaakw kagaají*  
*s'áaxw*  
*tíx'*

#### English

trunk  
heartwood  
bark  
inner bark  
knife  
tree rings/years  
basket  
mat  
hat  
rope



# Yellow and Red Cedar

## Lingít Phrases

*Xáay eex sh tooskoo.*

*Teey woodí yax toosaháa.*

*At looní daa sá atayeewú?*

*Woosh kinaa yei duwa.oo.*

*Taakw.eetíx' teey woodí woosh káadei yei daa dunéi núch* Cedar bark is gathered in spring.

*Aasdáx aax gaX Yees'éil' wé teey woodí.* The bark is pulled from the tree.

*Gunalchéesh yoo yagax tusaḱaa wé aas.* We will thank the tree.

*Wooshdáx a láx'i yei ndusnéich.* The inner bark is separated.

*Shak'ligeiyi kákwx' yei gaxtusanéi.* We're going to make pretty baskets.

## Activities

### Activity #1

#### What's under the bark?

Using the tree layers activity pages (see Resources) teach students the names of parts of a cedar tree: heartwood, inner bark and outer bark. Use English and Lingít words to label each part. Explain to students that the inner bark is the layer used by Haida and some Tlingit people for weaving mats, hats, baskets and for making rope. Show them how they can count the number of rings on the heartwood to figure out how old a tree is.

Show your students some real cedar bark. Let them feel it and smell it. Let them know that you will all go to the forest to help gather cedar bark.

## Assessment

Do students understand that trees have several layers under the bark? Can they tell which layer produces the cedar bark that is used for weaving? Record the language used and learned on a student checklist.

## Resources included with this lesson

Tree cookie pattern

Bark Activity pages

## Lesson #3

### Let's Learn about Weaving

#### Objectives

Students:

- Acquire knowledge about the importance of trade between the Tlingit and Haida people
- Learn the importance of cedar bark in making items for containers, clothing, art
- Learn new Lingít words and phrases

#### Time

60 minutes



## Materials

- Study Prints of cedar containers
- Brown paper lunch bags
- Brown construction paper strips for weaving
- Brown construction paper for mats
- Scissors
- Sample or photograph of a cedar bark basket
- Sample or photograph of a cedar bark mat

## Vocabulary

### Lingít

*kaséik'w*

*s'áaxw*

*kóok*

*yaakw*

*kákw*

*woosh daséix'un wool.át*

*da.aak*

*naxáash*

*a kaanáx*

*atayeenáx*

### English

rope neck ring

hat

box

canoe

basket

trade

weave

cut it

over

under

## Lingít Phrases

*Xáay daayi (kákw) dulyéix.*

*Xáay daayi (s'áaxw) dulyéix.*

*Xáay daayi (kóok) dulyéix.*

*Xáay daayi (yaakw) dulyéix.*

*(Gaach) gatu.aak.*

*(Kákw) gatu.aak.*

A (basket) is made from cedar bark.

A (hat) is made from cedar bark.

A (box) is made from cedar bark.

A (canoe) is made from cedar bark.

Let's weave a (mat).

Let's weave a (basket).

## Activities

### Activity #1

#### Exploring prints and artifacts made from cedar

Invite an Elder, Culture Bearer, or parent to visit your classroom. Ask them to bring items they own, made from cedar bark. If this is not possible, arrange to visit a local museum to observe cedar artifacts on display. Have students look at the study prints (see resources) and talk about what they see. Record any questions that students may have about how things were/are made, and use those questions with the Elder and/or museum staff when they talk to students.

### Activity #2

#### Trade between Tlingits and Haidas

Invite an Elder or Culture Bearer to tell students about the trade that took/takes place between Tlingits and Haidas. Ask him/her to talk specifically about cedar trees, bark and items made from cedar. Explain to the children that geographically there are very few cedar trees that grow naturally in northern Southeast Alaska. The Tlingits have to travel to the south to obtain parts of the valuable cedar tree.



# Yellow and Red Cedar

## Activity #3 Learning about weaving

Invite a local weaver to come in to class demonstrate and describe weaving. Try to record the visit with photographs to add to the Forest Center. Ask students to generate any questions they may have about the weaving process and direct them to the visiting weaver. With help from a weaver, parent or an instructional assistant, set up two weaving locations in your classroom, one for baskets and one for mats.

Show students a cedar bark basket and a cedar bark mat. (Use pictures if you don't have access to real items.) Talk with the class about the weaving process, using the words over, under, over, under.

Demonstrate with a paper mat how weaving is done with paper. Have older students, a parent or an assistant ready to help in each location. Kindergarten and first grade students will need more help weaving than the second grade students.

### Weaving a paper bag basket:

Cut 1-inch vertical slits (see resources) before beginning to weave. You may need to help the children do this.

1. Fold the top of the bag over 2 times to make it begin to take a basket shape.
2. Demonstrate going over and under, through the slits with one strip, helping students with the next strip.
3. The third strip can be woven independently while you watch. Give directions again as students need assistance and reminders.
4. Continue until the slits have all been woven with strips.

### Weaving a mat:

Cut 1-inch vertical slits (see resources) before beginning to weave. You will need to do this part for most of your students. Have weaving strips already cut.

1. Demonstrate how to go over and under, over and under through the slits.
2. Help students with the next strip.
3. Most children will be able to do the third strip independently. Sometimes they "jump the fence", making the strip skip a slit. Older children who catch on quickly can help younger children.

### Assessment

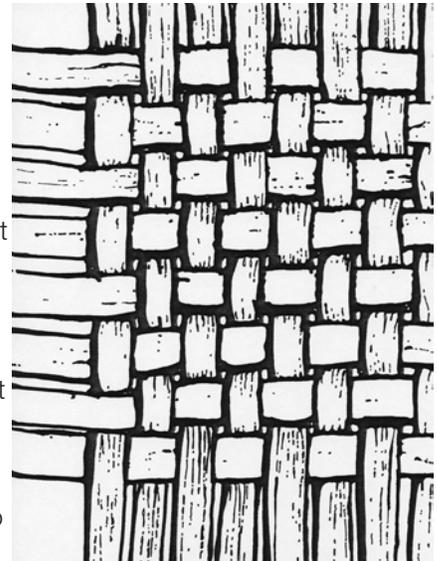
Observe students as they interact with Elder/Culture Bearer.

Check to see if each student is able to complete a weaving activity, working cooperatively with other children who are at the center at the same time.

Write a thank you letter to the guest weaver, noting what the class learned from him/her about the process of weaving as a way to check for understanding.

### Optional Extension Activities

Gather a collection of cedar bark woven hats, basket, and mats from parents, family members, other teachers to display in the Forest Center. Ask children to tell or write stories about what the items on display might be used for.





## Lesson #4 Here is Our Forest

### Objectives

Students:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the elements of sun, water, soil, plants, birds and animals that are part of the forest ecosystem.
- Learn Lingít names for these elements

### Time

20 minute sessions with each small group of students over a period of several days

### Materials

- Large sheet of butcher paper (large enough to mount on a classroom wall)
- Paints, crayons, markers, scissors
- Glue or paste

### Vocabulary

#### Lingít

*x'éen*  
*gagaan*  
*héen*  
*ka.éix átx'i*  
*aas*  
*ch'áak'*  
*yéil*  
*kanals'áak*  
*as gutú kusteeyí*

#### English

mural  
sun  
water  
plants  
trees  
eagle  
raven  
squirrel  
forest ecosystem

### Lingít Phrases

*Xéen yéi gaxtusanéi.*  
*X'éen yei naxtusanéi.*  
*Daa sá as gutuwú?*  
*Kudziteeyí át yaháayi kayshaxít.*  
*Ka.éix át yaháayi kayshaxít.*  
*Kaylasék'w.*  
*Aax kei xaash.*  
*X'éen kát kaylas'ix'w.*

We're going to make a mural.  
Let's make a mural.  
What's in a forest?  
Draw an animal.  
Draw a plant.  
Color it.  
Cut it out.  
Glue it onto the mural.

### Activities

#### Activity #1 Let's make a mural

Ask students to help you list things they have seen in the forest. (trees, rocks, plants, squirrels, birds, eagles, ravens, crows, a stream, the sky, insects, sun, rain, soil, etc.) Write them on a big sheet of paper during your discussion. Help students understand that these parts of a forest make up a forest ecosystem.



# Yellow and Red Cedar

Showing students the list, invite them to help make a big picture – a mural - of the forest ecosystem. Ask children to sign their names on the class list to show what forest element they would like to illustrate. Encourage pairs of students to work together. Try to have many forest parts represented.

## **There are several ways students can make a mural:**

Each child can make a drawing with crayons or markers, cut it out and glue it to a part of the mural; or

Some large parts of the mural can be painted with water color paints or tempa, providing a background for the smaller, individual illustrations. Brainstorm with your students, offering possibilities for them to make a plan for their mural.

Schedule 20 minute sessions for groups of painters to work on their part of the mural over a period of several days.

## **Activity #2** **Sharing the forest mural**

Invite another class or parents to visit your classroom or the hallway outside to see the mural display. Invite students to tell which parts they worked on, giving information about that particular element, what it does for the forest ecosystem. Have students answer questions from the guests.

## **Assessment**

Observe and note knowledge portrayed visually in the mural and in the responses students give to questions raised.

## **Lesson #5** **Trees Make Containers**

---

### **Objectives**

Students:

- Learn about traditional ways of showing respect to living things in the forest
- Learn the steps for making a bentwood box and apply that knowledge by constructing their own bentwood boxes

### **Time**

45 minutes/ day for two consecutive days

### **Materials**

- Paper Bentwood Box Pattern or Beeway sections, 1 per student
- Tub of warm water
- Pictures of bentwood boxes or actual boxes
- Glue
- How to Make Bentwood Boxes Booklet, 1 per student
- Cardboard squares or cedar squares to make a box bottom
- Red Paint or Stamps clan design stencils and markers



## Vocabulary

### Lingít

*lákt*

*t'á a*

*Ch'á yei googéink' áwé yoo duwaxashk'.*

*ǰút'aa*

*yees*

*ǰáay tooyei ǰwa.oo*

### English

bentwood box

plank

kerf

adze

wedge

steamed

## Lingít Phrases

*Ldakát at a yakgnahéiyaaгу kudzitee.*

*Wé aas wududligéech.*

*Gunalchéesh yoo yawdudzikaa wé aas.*

*Lákt ga toolayéǰ.*

*Nas'kidaheen gaxyeexaash wé t'áa.*

*Wé t'áa ǰáay too yéi ǰwa.oo.*

*Kadulk'waat' wé t'áa.*

*ǰaay toodax kagaxyila k'waat' wé t'áa.*

*Kalak'waat'.*

*Naneegwál'.*

All living things have a spirit.

The tree is cut down.

The tree is thanked.

Let's make a bentwood box.

The plank has three kerfs cut into it.

The plank is steamed.

The plank is bent.

Right from the steam you're going to bend it.

Bend it.

Paint it.

## Activities

### Activity #1

#### Learning about bentwood boxes

Gather the class around you and describe the construction a bentwood box. Explain how people in Southeast used these boxes as containers. Ask them what might be carried in such a container.

Show pictures of boxes or bring in actual boxes. Explain to the students that the Tlingit way of thinking is that all things have a spirit. We need to respect that spirit. The wood from the tree that makes bentwood boxes has a spirit. If we respect that spirit, the object we are making with the wood will be made successfully.

Read the Bentwood Box book to the class. Let students know that they will be making a model of a bentwood box. Disseminate one beeway plank to each student, along with a mini bentwood box book. Explain to the students that they will carefully bend their box at the kerfs. Remind them that they need to be respectful – Don't be forceful.

Gently bend the kerfs and put the dovetailed joints together by pounding with a fist. Square the box by bending the box a little more. Tell students to use a pencil to write their names in the corner. Put them in a specified place to dry over night.



## Activity #2 Finishing bentwood boxes

### Teacher preparation

Prior to class use the moiety and clan designs in the resources to make templates or use compressed sponges to make stamps to add designs to the bentwood boxes.

### Activity

Discuss Tlingit social structure with the class. The Tlingit society is a matrilineal one - you follow your mother's line. Tlingits are divided in two moieties - Raven and Eagle. Moiety means divided in half. In addition, you are a member of a clan. Your clan or your family is represented by a clan name and one or more clan designs. Some clans have the same or similar crest designs. Some clans have more than one design.

### Tlingit Clan Names and Clan Designs

#### Yéil - Raven Moiety

- Laayaneidí* - raven
- Lukaax.ádi* - sockeye
- L'ukna<sub>x</sub>.ádi* - coho
- T'akdeintaan* - tern
- Kiks.ádi* - frog
- Deisheetaan* - beaver
- Kaach.ádi* - raven
- Ishkahittaan* - raven
- L'eeneidí* - dog salmon
- Sukteeneidí* - raven
- Gaanaxteidí* - raven
- Gaanax.ádi* - frog
- Kwaashk'i Kwáan* - humpback salmon

#### Ch'áak' - Eagle Moiety

- Yanyeidí* - wolf
- Shangukeidí* - thunderbird/eagle
- Teikweidí* - brown bear
- Dakl'aweidí* - killer whale
- S'ikna<sub>x</sub>.ádi* - black bear
- Naanyaa.aayí* - killer whale
- S'eet'kweidí* - eagle
- Chookaneidí* - porpoise
- Kaagwaantaan* - wolf
- Tsaagweidí* - killer whale/seal
- Was'eeneidí* - brown bear
- Naasteidí* - eagle/flicker
- Neix.ádi* - beaver/halibut/eagle

The outer corners of utility boxes are painted red. Boxes that were used for trade or ceremonial purposes were carved or painted with clan and moiety designs. Students can complete their boxes by either painting the corners red or using sponges or stamps with clan or moiety designs.

Students can choose a moiety design and an appropriate clan design to decorate their bentwood boxes.





## **Assessment**

Make a visual check to determine if the students complete the project successfully. Ask each student to name of the moiety and clan design on his/her box.

## **Reference Materials and Websites**

*The Bentwood Box: An Activity Book*, by Nan McNutt, ISBN 0-9614534-7-8  
Beeway section boxes, <http://www.kelleybees.com>, Walter T. Kelley Company, 807 West Main Street; Clarkson, Kentucky, 42726-0240.