



**SSHEAN**

*Social Studies & History Education  
in the Anthropocene Network*

# ***Angry Inuk:***

## **Thinking Critically about Historical Perspectives**

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### **Lesson Challenge**

In this lesson, students will learn about diverse perspectives on Inuit seal hunting and the sale of seal skin products in the past and the present.

Through watching a documentary film and taking part in a series of activities with accompanying handouts, students will use evidence to draw inferences about Inuit values and perspectives over time. They will critically examine the voices of various stakeholders involved in this environmental policy debate.

Students will consider how their perspectives on seal hunting have changed, as a result of watching this documentary and taking part in the activities.

The accompanying materials for this lesson include: a Lesson Plan (this document) for teachers, a Slideshow, and an Activity Sheets package for students.



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## Inquiry Question

Whose perspectives on environmental policies and decisions should matter?

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## Lesson Details

### Grade Level

- Grades 9-12 and postsecondary (ages 14+)

### Subject Areas

- Social studies (history, geography, civics)
- Language arts, film studies
- Indigenous studies

### Duration

- 120-150 minutes (could be expanded over multiple class meetings)

### Learning Objectives

- Students will learn:
  - to consider diverse perspectives on Inuit seal hunting and the sale of seal skin products in the past and the present.
  - to use evidence to draw inferences about Inuit values and perspectives over time.
  - to critically examine the voices of stakeholders involved in this environmental policy debate.
  - to consider the role of emotion, alongside evidence, in learning about and from the past.

### Background Knowledge

- Consider what your students have previously learned about:
  - Indigenous relations to land, animals, hunting practices and conservation efforts. Remind them that not all Indigenous communities are alike and learning about Inuit culture may present important distinctions from First Nations or Métis peoples.
  - Environmental policymaking in Canada, or globally, including species conservation agreements and stakeholders.

**Please note:** It may be necessary for teachers to create or adapt the information in this lesson for different grades/age levels or backgrounds/contexts.

## Vocabulary

### Inferences

Drawing conclusions on the basis of evidence and reasoning.

### Overidentification

Identifying oneself to an excessive degree with someone or something else, especially in cases when experiences are vastly different.

### Indifference

Demonstrating a lack of interest or concern.

### Historical Empathy

A cognitive (critical thinking) and affective (emotions) process of understanding the thoughts, feelings, actions, and decisions of people in the past within their particular historical contexts.

### Inuit/Inuk

Indigenous peoples of the circumpolar Arctic.

### European Union

A political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe.

### Subsistence

Hunting for personal/family use, primarily for food, not to be sold.

### Commercial Hunt

Hunting for the purpose of selling part of the animal for profit.



## Summary of Activities

1. View the documentary film *Angry Inuk*, pausing for reflection and discussion.
2. Identify evidence of Inuit perspectives and experiences regarding seal hunting and the sale of seal skin products.
3. Consider diverse perspectives from various stakeholders on this environmental policy issue, and identify whose voices are loudest and should be loudest within these discussions.

## Considerations for Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Teachers are encouraged to consider the following while implementing this lesson:

- Review the entire film before you show it to your students so that you know what to expect. Determine how you will support your students, depending on their age, maturity, and life experience, to handle scenes where seals are being hunted and eaten, or where there is mention of suicide.

**Special Note:** After you preview the film, if you are inhibited from showing it because of your own lack of familiarity or comfort with Indigenous hunting practices, consider the reasons for that lack of familiarity. If you were denied opportunities to learn about Indigenous lifeways, especially land-based practices or Arctic contexts, do you want to perpetuate that distance or work to bridge over it? What would the value of learning about Indigenous subsistence have meant to you at a younger age? Do you anticipate that your students would share that lack of familiarity with hunting, or might some of them have experience to build from, and share? Think about where you get your food, and where your students get their food, and how much you and they know about that process. Think about how often your students are exposed to a variety of ways of living in the world, and a variety of subsistence practices that human communities participate in. Remember, the Earth has a multitude of environments that support different forms of agriculture and subsistence. Only very recently have (some) people all over the globe had the privilege of picking and choosing where their food comes from or selecting a vegan diet. Make sure that you do not discount this film out of a sense that hunting is unnecessary or backward, or out of an unexamined ethnocentrism. For many, responsible hunting is a celebrated way of life, and a way to stay connected with the environment.

## Accommodations

- Enable captions on the documentary film for hearing impaired students.
- Provide verbal image descriptions for visually impaired students.
- Allow students to verbally complete the charts on each Activity Sheet.

### Criteria & Concepts

#### Historical Thinking Concept(s)\*

- Historical Perspectives
- Evidence

\* Seixas, P. & Morton, T. (2013). *The big six historical thinking concepts*. Nelson. [www.historicalthinking.ca](http://www.historicalthinking.ca)



# Angry Inuk

## Lesson Activity 1

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In this activity students will begin watching the film *Angry Inuk*. They will identify moments in the film that represent evidence of Inuit perspectives on seal hunting.

### Setting Up the Activity

Begin class by allowing students time to individually reflect on the self-reflection questions (slide 2). Provide students with a content warning (slide 3), which you may wish to revise or adapt for your students and school protocols. Next, provide an overview of the class (slide 4) and review the inquiry question (slide 5).

Set up the activity by explaining the historical thinking concept “historical perspectives” which means inferring how people felt and thought in the past, referring to slide 6. Explain that perspective taking relies on the use of evidence in making inferences about others’ perspectives. You may wish to acknowledge differences in experiences, backgrounds, and/or worldviews from the historical actors students are learning about.

Next, use slide 7 to highlight the overall goals related to historical perspectives: historical empathy and considering a combination of emotions and evidence in order to make inferences. Ideally, students are aware of the risks of over-identification with others, and also avoid remaining indifferent to others’ circumstances.

### The Activity

1. Pass out Activity Sheet 1 to all students.
2. Orient students to the Activity Sheet by reading through the column headings. Provide students with clear instructions about how much content should appear on their Activity Sheet and whether they are being formally assessed. For example, they might describe a memorable moment in the film with a few words, which should be followed by explaining what this moment tells them about Inuit perspectives.
3. Show the first 20 minutes of the film. *Angry Inuk* can be accessed through the National Film Board of Canada’s website: [https://www.nfb.ca/film/angry\\_inuk/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/angry_inuk/)
4. Pause the film after the scene of the children sledding on the seal skins (18:15). Allow a few minutes for students to fill out Activity Sheet 1.
5. Discuss at least one line of Activity Sheet 1 as a class. As an example, mention moments such as: the cute photo of the children with seal blood on their faces, or the distribution of seal meat to the community after the hunt.
6. Prompt students to continue filling out the remaining sections of Activity Sheet 1 during the rest of the film.

### Estimated Time

- 40-50 minutes

### Required Materials

- Slideshow
- Activity Sheet 1
- *Angry Inuk* film



## Angry Inuk

# Lesson Activity 2

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In this activity students will finish watching the remaining hour of the documentary *Angry Inuk*. They will consider diverse perspectives from various stakeholders on the environmental policies surrounding seal hunting and the sale of seal skins. Students will complete an activity that has them think about whose voices are loudest within these discussions and why.

### Setting Up the Activity

Set up the activity by explaining another element of “historical perspectives,” which involves considering diverse perspectives, referring to slide 11. Explain that there are often many different perspectives on events and circumstances, both in the past and the present, and exploring these is key to understanding historical events.

### The Activity

1. Pass out Activity Sheet 2 to all students.
2. Orient students to the Activity Sheet by explaining the two time periods discussed in the film: 1983, the time of the ban on white harp seal-pup furs and 2009, around the time of the extended ban on all seal products by the EU. For each of the groups (Animal Rights Activists, EU Legislators, Inuit), students will circle 1, 2, 3, or 4 to indicate how loud each of these groups’ voices were in the history of the seal hunting controversy. They will also need to provide specific evidence from the film to support the number they circled. Provide students with clear instructions about how much content should appear on their Activity Sheet and whether they are being formally assessed. Students may wish to circle the numbers that indicate the volume during the film, and then return to complete the request for evidence after it is finished.
3. Show the remaining hour of the film.
4. Once the film has finished, allow a few minutes for students to fill out Activity Sheet 2.
5. Discuss Activity Sheet 2 as a class. If there is time, teachers may also consider revisiting Activity Sheet 1 to see if students have anything else to add from the rest of the film.
6. Discuss the critical thinking questions on slides 16-19 as a class. There are points included underneath the questions on each slide to help guide the discussion, but you may wish to remove them or provide them to the students only after they have contributed.
7. Allow students time for individual reflection on the questions found on slide 20.

### Extension

Using slides 20-23 as a prompt, allow students time to conduct research into seal populations today as well as any updates on the seal hunting ban and Inuit activism.

### Estimated Time

- 75-100 minutes

### Required Materials

- Slideshow
- Activity Sheet 2
- *Angry Inuk* documentary film



## Angry Inuk

# References & Further Reading

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Arnaquq-Baril, A. (2016). *Angry Inuk* [film]. National Film Board of Canada and EyeSteelFilm. [https://www.nfb.ca/film/angry\\_inuk/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/angry_inuk/)

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