

**Grade Level:** 6-7

**Curriculum:** Explorations, ADST, English Language Arts, Art

**Title of Lesson:** The Mountain of S'Gaana

**Learning Goals/Objectives:**

- Design can be responsive to identified needs
- Complex tasks may require multiple tools and technologies
- Through art making, one's sense of identity and community continually evolves
- Dance, drama, music and visual arts are each a unique language for creating and communicating
- Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world
- Exploring and sharing multiple perspectives extends our thinking
- Learning requires the exploration of one's identity

**Materials Needed:**

- Pencil and paper
- Computer access with internet to watch film
- Colouring supplies

**Activity Instructions: (Step by Step)**

- Film is one way for a person, or people, to tell a story. Just like in a picture book, where the images help tell the story, or in a chapter book with plenty of descriptions, film can use things like animation style, a soundtrack, and editing to help tell the story visually.
- At its core, though, a film is just a story, which contains the same basic elements of any other story:
  - The **opening/situation**, which sets up the **problem**, or **conflict** in the story
  - The **rising action**, which intensifies, or makes the problem worse
  - The **climax**, where the excitement in the story is at its peak, and the **solution** to the problem becomes clear
  - The **falling action**, where the story begins to wrap up
  - The **conclusion**, where the story ends. The problem is not necessarily solved here, because in life, there isn't always a happy ending!
    - As you watch the following film (~10 minute long), try to notice when the plot hits each of these moments.

- [The Mountain of Sgaana, Directed by Christopher Auchter](#)
- Now that you've seen the film, let us reflect:
  - This film is the Director, Christopher Auchter's adaptation and celebration of the Haida story of Naa-Naa-Simgat. He made changes to the traditional telling of the story (where Naa-Naa-Simgat saves a loved one, instead of being saved by the loved one) to celebrate the strong Haida women in his life. In making this change, we learn more about the identity of the director, who values these connections in his own life. Why do you think it is important to understand the director's perspective?
  - As we learn more about [Canada's history with Residential Schools](#), and the impact they had, and still have on the Indigenous people sent to them, and their communities, why do you think it is important to see these stories?
    - Why do you think it is important that Indigenous art, stories and culture is presented like this?
  - What do you notice about how this story has been presented?
    - Think specifically about how it is visually presented. What do you notice?
    - Think about how sound is used in telling the story. What do you notice?
- When we write and tell stories, we are sharing a piece of ourselves with the world, even if the story is not about us. Stories we tell are connected to our personal identity!
  - Your task is to write a story which explores the idea of identity. Consider the following prompts to help you get started:
    - The Mountain of Sgaana uses a cultural story to explore identity (by experiencing the story through the mouse's knitting, the fisherman is able to connect with his identity both figuratively and literally, when he saves the couple from the whale in the end). Think about your culture- can you think of a way that you could explore identity with story?
    - Identity includes many things, and not all of them are linked to culture. Think about self-image, beliefs about the world, personality and how we interact with others in the community. Using these ideas, can you think of an idea for a story to explore personal identity?
    - Our identity also relates to the things we enjoy doing (hiking, reading, sports, time with friends and loved ones, along with other hobbies). Can you think of a way to include these other parts of identity in your story?

- To help organize your thinking, feel free to use the story planning sheet included here. If you get stuck, try using this process to get you moving again:
  - Start with the problem:
    - You need to write a story that explores the idea of identity
  - Next, brainstorm as many ideas as you can that relate to the problem:
    - Make a list of everything you know about identity.
    - Make another list about the things you don't completely understand, or aren't sure of about identity
  - Once you have a list, you can start to develop your story around what you do, and don't know about the problem.
    - Remember, stories take us on a journey, it can be good to start with what we aren't sure about and work through the idea!
  - Start to formulate your ideas into a plot.
    - Try a few different combinations! Our first idea isn't always our best, or favourite one!
  - Read your story to yourself in your head, and out loud. You might be surprised at how it has developed!
    - It may feel silly reading out loud, but it is helpful when you are trying to find your writer's voice! Be patient with yourself and when you read the story, imagine you are performing it for your many fans!
  - Reflect on the story.
    - What parts do you like? Are there parts that don't flow as nicely as you'd like? Are there places where you really like how you've written and want to use that same style in another place?
    - Try out some changes! Change is good, and can always be undone!
- Once you have your story "fleshed out", think about your main character. If you were to turn your story into an animated film, what would they look like?
  - Use the drawing sheet (or a blank piece of paper if you don't have access to a printer) to draw the front and side view of your character. Remember, the story and character art reflect *your* style and identity, so be brave and be bold with your choices!

- When you have completed your story, and character drawing, share your story with your family and friends, if you feel comfortable sharing. Ask them if they have any stories that they might be willing to share!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Story #1 Planning Sheet

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTERS – Who

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SETTING – When & Where

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PLOT – What Happened & Why

Exposition \_\_\_\_\_

Rising Action \_\_\_\_\_

Climax \_\_\_\_\_

Falling Action \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution \_\_\_\_\_

CONFLICT \_\_\_\_\_

THEME – Author's Message \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Character Design Sheet

Character: \_\_\_\_\_

**Front**

**Side**

The form consists of two large, vertically oriented rounded rectangular boxes with thick black outlines. The left box is labeled 'Front' and the right box is labeled 'Side'. These boxes are intended for drawing the character's appearance from these two perspectives.