

# Ahtna Cultural Education Curriculum

## Lesson Plan: Gets - Mittens



*Nay'dini'aa Na' Hwt'aene Ugheldze' Xuk'anotta – Nurture the Land and People Project*

Cultural Development

### **Introduction**

Our mission in providing an Ahtna Cultural Education Curriculum is to teach the community about our culture as the Indigenous people of *Nay'dini'aa Na'*, Chickaloon Village. We hope to provide a better understanding of our history and culture as we move forward in living, preserving, and restoring our traditions. In Chickaloon we learn by doing. This idea that you learn by just trying and allowing oneself to fail, problem solve, and eventually succeed. This kind of reverse engineering is reminiscent of many indigenous learning systems which focus on holistic knowledge. To teach about the values in indigenous learning methods and teach about respect for environment and indigenous materials.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank our tribal matriarch Katherine Wade. Her vision for culturally immersive education impressed the importance for a living environment of traditional learning for our children and tribal citizens.

### **Reflection**

To address the immediate need to provide Ahtna cultural restoration and preservation. Writing a complete Ahtna Cultural

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# Gets

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## Gets Unit

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### Overview and Goals

This lesson is called Get or Mittens. In this lesson we will be teaching participants how to sew Ahtna Athabascan mittens. The goal is to make a pair of Ahtna Athabascan mittens and educate several Ahtna Athabascan words involved with the activity

### Exploring Gets - Mittens

The strings attached to the mittens allow the wearer to take the mitts off and hang onto them without misplacing them or to tie them behind his or her waist when they need to get them temporarily out of the way. When asked why some people call the mitt strings. “idiot strings.”, “It’s simply that they don’t know how to use them the right way. They can be very useful. You have your mittens around your neck when you want them. If you put them down while driving dogs, you might lose one. They are just a part of our winter gear.”



### Ahtna Cultural Education Curriculum

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Chief William (deyemaddins) and his wife, Sudinatnitz, wear western and traditional garments, including mittens and mitten strings. Interior Alaska, circa 1926, Courtesy of Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Richard Frank Photograph Collection, 1997-1222-22.

## Ahtna Phrases

**Su'u**-I don't know

**Ugheli**-Good

**Gaani yidi nt'ae**yi-What is this?

**Gaani lu'** \_\_\_\_ -This is a \_\_\_\_.

**'aen'**-Yes

**Kole**-No

**Nts'e doht'ae**-How are you all?

**Nts'e dit'ae**-How are you?

**Ugheli aa' ts'ilaen**-We are all good.

**Ugheli etaen**-I am good.

**'Aani koht'aene igge' dozolts'ii**

-Come people sit.

**Suuxdohlaex**-You all get ready

**\_\_udi'itket**-Pick up \_\_\_\_ (one person)

**xona**-All done.

**N'eyiits'de nahw'snel'iiit**-Lord

willing (our breath) we see you all again

## Ahtna Vocabulary

### 7 Sewing Items

1. **Ts'aex**-Thread

2. **Tl'ankaani**-Needle

3. **Lindeldots'i**-Scissors

4. **Lay'dak**-Thimble

5. **Kon' ggaay**-Lighter

7. **Hnaa tsesi**-Sewing bag

8. **Gets** – Mittnes

9. **Gets tl'uule'** – Mitten strings

10. **Lagets'** - Gloves

## Reference



## Step one

This is what you will find in your packets



## Step two

Start sewing on the ribbon on to the end of your fur with the ribbon faced down on the top of the fur. You will be sewing a whip stitch.



## Step three

Sew across the bottom of the fur



## Step four

Sew in the same way with your strip of fur





### **Step five**

Sew ribbon onto the leather piece which is the bottom portion of your mitten



### **Step six**

Sew the other piece of leather onto the ribbon



### **Step seven**

This is what your two pieces of your mitten should look like so far



### **Step eight**

Now we are going to get started on sewing on the thumb. Before positioning your thumb onto your bottom mitten piece fold up your rounded thumb piece.



## Step nine

Place your thumb piece on top of your bottom part of your mitten



## Step ten

Put your piece of felt in between your leather and start sewing together the bottom part of your thumb piece



## Step eleven

This is what your bottom portion of your mitten should look like before you start sewing up your thumb portion



## Step twelve

Stop sewing where we marked and tie a knot





### **Step thirteen**

Example of what your thumb should look like so far



### **Step fourteen**

Place your bottom piece of your mitten on top of the fur side of leather and place the strip of felt in between your fur piece and leather piece. Then begin sewing your mitten together.



### **Step sixteen**

Example of how your mitten should be coming along



### **Step seventeen**

On the top portion of your mitten crimp the leather that has the fur on and then sew



### **Step eighteen**

This what your mitten should look like when you are done sewing together your mitten



### **Step nineteen**

Turn your mitten inside out



### **Step twenty**

Trim off the excess felt



### **Step twenty-one**

Once you are complete this is how your mitten should turn out. Then continue these steps to complete your other mitten.



## Teacher Guide

### Session 1 – Sewing Items

#### 1.) Pre-task – ½ hour before class

1. Set chairs around table.
2. Make sure table is cleared off.
3. Have 7 sewing items on table.

#### 2.) Task – 1 hour and 45 minutes

4. Greet students in Ahtna, and ask the students to sit around the table. *Nts'e doht'ae* (How are all you?) or if one person: *Nts'e dit'ae* (How are you?)  
The response is: *Ugheli aa' ts'ilaen* (we are all good) or  
If one person is answering: *Ugheli etaen* (I am good)  
*'Aani koht'aene igge' dozolts'ii* (Come people sit down)  
*Suuxdohtaex* (You all get ready)
5. Remind students that it's important to have fun and not to worry about making mistakes. Laughter is an important part of learning, and when we laugh we can relax and begin to learn.
6. Instruct students if they do not know the word, they can say: *Su'u* (I don't know), and gesture by shrugging shoulders.
7. Instruct students who cannot find the words to use, they can throw their hands up in the air and say, *Ugheli!* (Good). Explain by this action along it will help them to reset their mind to start again.
8. Students will begin by learning the vocabulary words by listening.
9. Teacher will say words and point at item saying:  
*Gaani lu' tl'anikaani* (This is needle.)  
*Gaani lu' ts'aex* (This is thread.)  
*Gaani lu' tindeldots'i* (This is scissors.)  
*Gaani lu' kon' ggaay* (This is lighter.)  
*Gaani lu' lay'dak* (This is thimble.)  
*Gaani lu' c'ezes nats'ayi* (This is leather strip.)  
*Gaani lu' hnaa tsesi* (This is sewing bag.)

## Materials

- Table
- Chairs
- Sewing Bag
- Glover Needles
- Sinew thread (simulated)
- Thimble
- Leather Scissors
- Eye glasses
- Small lighter
- Pattern for Mittens
- Leather
- Fur skin (doesn't have to be real fur you can use simulated fur)
- Flower ribbon (for decoration)

## Evaluation Assessment:

- To observe that the participants had completed in making their pair of mittens
- Ask questions to participants about some of the Ahtna words they have learned during the activity (For example: What is the Ahtna word for mittens?)

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