

The People of the Sea



Told by Donald Uluadluak

EDUCATOR'S
RESOURCE



The People of the Sea

About the Book

The People of the Sea is about a boy and his friends encountering *arnajuinnaq* in the water near Arviat, Nunavut. Told by Donald Uluadluak, this story captures his childhood memories of seeing the mysterious people of the sea and learning about what he saw as he listens to his parents and grandparents.

About the Author

Donald Uluadluak was born in Arviat and raised by his grandparents, when Inuit were nomadic and depended on game for survival. He was an Elder advisor for the Nunavut Department of Education for several years. After he retired, he began recording memories and recollections from his life to publish as books for future generations. He was passionate about teaching the younger generation so that they would in turn pass on the knowledge he shared.

Note to Educators

This educator's resource is written for Kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms. The suggested discussion questions and activities can be adapted for each class according to the experiences of students.

Teachers can use this book to teach about topics such as:

- Traditional storytelling
- The importance of learning through storytelling
- The importance of listening to, and learning from, Elders
- Arnajuinnaq (the people of the sea)
- Asking questions to learn more about a new topic

Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

- Show students the cover of the book.
 - What do you think this story is about?
 - What does the image on the cover make you think of or remind you of?
 - Do you think this story is going to be fiction or non-fiction?
 - *If you've not yet discussed these categories in the younger grades, this could be a good opportunity to introduce these two words.*
- For Kindergarten and Grade 1 students, point out features of the cover.
 - Who can point to the title?
 - Who can point to the illustration?
 - Who can point to the author's name?

- *If you have not yet taught the words “author,” “illustrator,” “title,” or “illustration,” this is a good time to introduce the terms and allow students to practise finding these on all read-aloud stories used in the classroom.*
- o What do we know about the story from reading the title?
- For younger students, you may wish to record student responses on a whiteboard or chart paper. For older students, you may wish to have students do this themselves, adding their ideas to a brainstorm page, or have them write a short prediction about the story before reading.
- Read the dedication.
 - o Where else have you heard the word “dedication”? (For example, a song at a concert is dedicated to someone.) What do you think “dedicate” means?
 - o This book is dedicated to a boy who was named after the author. Were you named after anyone?
- Read the pronunciation guide.
 - o Have students repeat each word after you.
- Tell students that Donald Uluadluak told this story and his daughter, Elizabeth, wrote it down so that many people could enjoy and learn from his story.



During and Post-Reading Discussion Questions

The following questions and discussion points can be used during and after reading *The People of the Sea*. Provide students with the chance to voice their own opinions, share their experiences, ask questions, or point out anything else they may notice about the book.

- Pages 6–9: Look at the images of Arviat in the illustrations. Does this look similar to where you live or does it look different? Do the illustrations remind you of your own community or somewhere you have been before?
- Pages 10–11: **If students are unfamiliar with sculpins:* Donald and his friends were looking for sculpins. Can you tell from the picture what a sculpin is?
 - o What kinds of things do you like to do with your friends for fun?



- Pages 12–13: What do you think the woman is doing in the water? Who do you think she is?
- Pages 16–17: Donald and his friends began to feel frightened by this woman. How do you think you would feel if you saw this?
 - You could take this opportunity to do a mini lesson on emotions. Using student suggestions, create a brainstorm of words that you can use to express how you feel (for example, scared, terrified, worried, surprised, shocked, excited, confused, or nervous).
- Retell what happened in the story using your own words.
- Why do you think Donald and his friends forgot the reason they ran back to their camp?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- Which page(s) of the story did you like best? *Allow students to turn to the page(s) that they liked.* Why did you choose this page?

Extension Activities

The following activities could be used to help strengthen students' understanding of the story. Adapt these suggestions to the ability level of your students as necessary.

Retelling

Summarize the story into a few main points (suggested sentences are provided below). Write or type these sentences on strips of paper and mix them up. Give each student one or more strips of paper. As a class, retell Donald's story by putting the summary in order. Students can read their sentence out loud before placing it in order. Depending on class size, you could do this as a whole class, or make multiple copies of the sentences so that smaller groups could race to put them in order. After students think they have the story in the correct order, look through the book together and check.

- Donald tells the reader he is going to tell us a true story.
- Donald and his friends were playing by the beach.
- Donald's friend points out a woman in the water nearby.
- The woman in the water didn't say anything or smile.
- Donald and his friends felt scared so they ran back to camp.
- The boys forgot why they ran to the camp.
- One year later, the boys told their Elders what they had seen.
- They learned that the woman was one of the arnajuinnaq.
- Arnajuinnaq are rarely seen anymore.

Writing Prompts

Use these writing prompts to give students the opportunity to connect to the story and share their own ideas and questions. Differentiate the prompts depending on students' reading and writing abilities.

- What would you do if you saw arnajuinnaq in the water? Who would you tell first?
- Write three questions about what you would still like to learn about arnajuinnaq after reading the story. You could even write these as a letter to an Elder who may be able to answer these questions.
- List as many words as you can that could be used to describe arnajuinnaq (for example, pretty, mysterious, beautiful, quiet). They could be words that were used in the story or words that you think of yourself when you see the images.

Storytelling

Invite an Elder into your classroom to tell stories from their childhood. Before they come, make a list of questions your students would like to ask them.

Talking Circle

Sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs. Pass around a talking piece and allow each student to have a turn answering a question about the story. Here are some possible questions:

- What do you like to do with your friends when you play outside?
- If you could speak to arnajuinnaq, what would you like to ask them?
- Why do you think people of the sea aren't seen as often now as they used to be?
- Tell us about a story you love to hear from your family members. Who in your family is the best at telling stories?

