


Arctic Region

Life in the North

What would it be like to live on another planet? Samson Ootoovak knows what it might be like to live on Mars! Samson is an Inuk, and grew up in the Arctic region. He knows about living in extreme environments. When he was an engineering student, Samson joined the Haughton-Mars Project.

With a group of scientists from around the world, Samson lived in a research station on Devon Island, an island in Nunavut. They tested technology that was being developed for use on Mars. They studied the island's landscape and climate. They saw the sun cast shadows over the land. They felt bone-chilling winds whip in from the Arctic Ocean, and they watched sea ice float away from the coast.

The landscape and climate of Canada's Far North has more in common with Mars than with any other place on Earth. Scientists believe that by studying places such as Devon Island, we can learn how to live on Mars and in other extreme places!



Samson has said he would like to be the first Inuk astronaut!

Canada: Our Stories Continue

Canada's Arctic region is sometimes called the land of the midnight sun. The Inuit who live in Nunavut, the main territory in the region, call the area "our land." The region has rocky valleys, high sea cliffs, thick ice, huge snowdrifts, and frozen lakes. People who live in this region have to be prepared for extreme cold; long, dark winters; and endless sunshine in summer!

? Critical Inquiry TIP

Creating

Electronic files, journals, and photos are some different ways you might use technology to record information.

? Inquiring Minds

Here are some questions to guide your inquiry for this chapter:

- Explain how different communities have adapted to the climate and geography of the region.
- Has change always been good for people in the Arctic? Explain.

Let's Explore the Arctic



Hello! My name is Katie Tikivik. I am Inuk, and I live in Arviat, in Nunavut. Arviat is on the coast of Hudson Bay.

The aurora borealis, or northern lights, provide a colourful display in the northern night sky for much of the year.



Legend

Elevation		★ Provincial or territorial capital
5000 m		● Towns
3000		--- Arctic Circle
2000	 Tree line
1000		- - - International boundary
500		— Provincial or territorial boundary
200		
sea level		
Ice cap		



Thinking It Through

- Look at the map and the photos of this region. What challenges does the geography of the Arctic region present to the people who live here?

Region!



Inuit whalers search for beluga whales in the Mackenzie Delta. In Canada today, some First Nations are the only groups legally allowed to hunt whales. In the Arctic, the hunt is managed by the Inuit and the government.



Long distances between communities in this region mean that most goods arrive by airplane. How might this affect ways of life in this region?

Iqaluit is the capital of Nunavut.

Skill Smart

- Make a chart to record the latitude and longitude of Iqaluit, Inuvik, Alert, and Katie's community, Arviat. What do you notice about the latitude readings?



The Arctic Region



Some of the islands in my region are the largest in the world! I wonder what the other big islands in Canada are.

The Arctic region includes a thin band of land along the coasts of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, as well as all of Nunavut. There are desolate areas such as Devon Island, but other parts of the region have tundra, mountains, rivers, and lakes. Muskrats, wolves, caribou, fox, and polar bears are found in this region. Whales, seals, and many kinds of fish are found in the rivers, lakes, and ocean. These animals have always provided the Inuit with what they need to survive.

Roots of the Region

The Inuit have always lived in this region. The traditional land of the Inuit has always been in what is now Nunavut, and in the many islands of the region. Inuit also live in the coastal areas of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

Europeans were first drawn to the North by the promise of a sea route to the Pacific. This route would later be called the Northwest Passage. Whaling stations were established along the coast, but were only used in summer, when ships could sail in the ice-free water. The possibility that the region might be rich in copper and gold encouraged Europeans to explore the interior.



The Arctic region has short summers, but the Arctic poppy can still grow there. What other plants grow in this region?

Why People Live Here Today

The Inuit continue to live in the region, as do the descendants of some of the Europeans who came to the region long ago. Other people come from the southern parts of Canada to work in the Arctic region.

The region has many natural resources such as copper, gold, zinc, and oil. Mining for diamonds is beginning in Nunavut. People work in service industries, or for the government. The natural beauty of the region and outdoor activities are enjoyed by many residents.



Voices of Canada

A Sea Poem

The great sea
Has sent me adrift;
It moves me
Like a reed in a great
river.

*Uvavnuk, an Iglulik woman,
recorded by Knud Rasmussen in
the 1800s*

What Affects Quality of Life in the Arctic Region?

Here is how the land, water, other natural resources, and climate affect quality of life for some people in the Arctic region.



Tourists visit the region and buy jewellery, carvings, and paintings made by local people. A lot of Inuit art tells about the land, water, and animals that can be found in the Arctic region. Shops help the community and support the artists.



Tourists who come to Ellesmere Island National Park arrive by helicopter. Here they can see glaciers, muskox, and Arctic fox—on Canada's most northerly island. Parks in this region protect rare plants and endangered wildlife.



The long distances between communities and camps in the Arctic region mean that people need to use different technologies to find their way as they travel. People sometimes travel overland or on the water, and there are not many roads. Global Positioning System (GPS) technology can help travellers find their way home.

Thinking It Through

- How might the land, water, other natural resources, and climate affect the type of work people do in Canada's Arctic region?



Katie's Inquiry

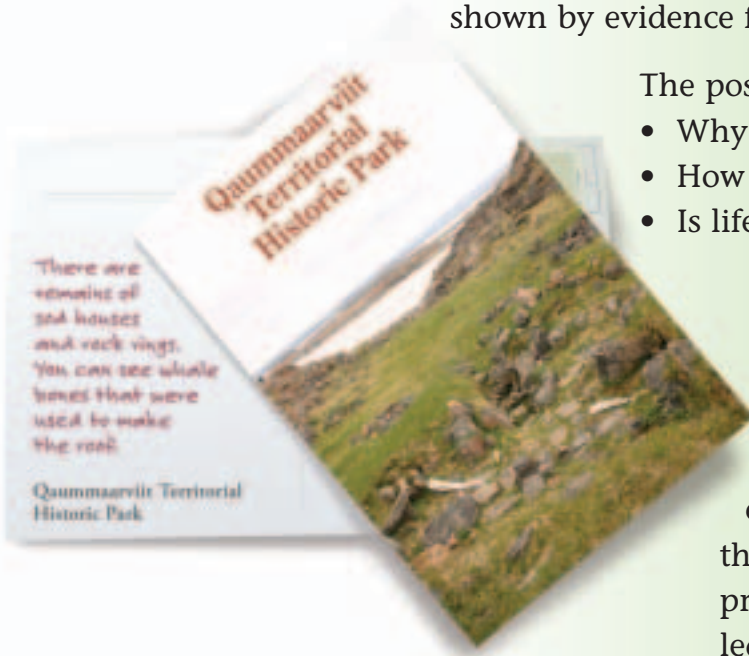
? Critical Inquiry TIP

Retrieving

Postcards, brochures, and guidebooks may provide information about the land, people, and history of an area.

My dad works for the Government of Canada. He goes on trips to different parks in the Arctic region. He works with local people to set up visitor centres, write guidebooks, or design Web sites about the land, animals, trees, and plants in the park. He also finds out stories about the people who have lived there in the past, and people who still live there today.

My dad just sent me a postcard from Qaummaarviit [how-mar-veet] Territorial Historic Park. It is on Baffin Island, near Iqaluit. How our ancestors lived long ago is shown by evidence found in the park.



The postcards make me want to ask:

- Why did people choose to live there?
- How can I learn more about them?
- Is life different in the area today? How?

I'm going to ask my dad if he can take some photographs, too.

Until he gets back, I'm going to visit the library and look for answers to my questions. I'll also e-mail my cousins in Iqaluit to see if they can help. Then I'll create a presentation to show what I have learned.

Skill Smart

- Brainstorm two questions you have about the Arctic region with a partner. Record your questions on the computer. Save your work so you can go back to this file when you have information to add.

Sharing Information with Others

When Katie prepared her presentation, she thought about the best way to share information. There are a few things to think about when making a presentation or a display.

<p>Why?</p> <p>Why are you sharing your information?</p>	<p>Who?</p> <p>Who are the people you will be presenting to?</p>	<p>What?</p> <p>What will you use to present your information?</p>
<p>Are you trying to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • persuade? • inform? • entertain? • examine? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classmates? • family members? • friends? • strangers? • Elders? • teachers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an essay? • an oral presentation? • a song? • a poem? • a dance? • a PowerPoint or multimedia presentation?

Practise the Skill

1. Plan a presentation about a park or historical site in the Arctic region. Consider your purpose, your audience, and a creative way to present your information to your audience.

Where Do People Live in the Arctic Region?



I am Inuk, and my ancestors have always lived in Canada's Arctic region. I wonder why other groups of people have come here.

Many of the people who live in the Arctic region are Inuit. The Inuit have always lived along the coastal areas and deep inlets of this region. People traditionally lived where they could find the resources they needed to survive. Today, many Inuit are working hard to preserve traditional ways of life, such as hunting and fishing, culture, and language.

Most settlements in the Arctic region are along the coast. There are very few settlements inland. Why do you think there are so few Inuit settlements inland? What does this tell you about the traditional ways of life of the Inuit?



Voices of Canada

Arviat

This student at Nunavut Arctic College has watched her community grow.

I've been living in Arviat since I was born. As I grow up, everything changes very slowly and we see new people. The population is getting bigger, but they still have their culture.

Albina Aggark, Arviat, 1989

More About...

The Population of the North

- The Arctic region makes up more than 20 percent of Canada's land area, but less than 22 000 people live in the region. That is less than one tenth of one percent!
- The Inuit make up more than 85 percent of the population of Nunavut.



Cape Dorset is located on Baffin Island. What are the advantages of the location of Cape Dorset? Why would this be a good place for a settlement?

Inuit Communities

For the Inuit, the birds, animals, sea, mountains, tundra, and ice were part of everyday life. From their environment, the Inuit obtained everything they needed to live. They developed ways of dealing with extreme cold and frozen land. They lived with the environment, understanding and respecting the animals, weather, seasons, land, sea, and ice.

The bison were an important resource for the First Nations of the plains. Just as important to the Inuit are seals, walrus, fish, and caribou. These animals provided food, clothing, cooking oil, and other items. The Inuit travelled along the coast, hunting and fishing. They used tents in the summer and igluit (iglus) in the winter for shelter. What do the Voices of Canada on this page tell about Inuit ways of life?



Voices of Canada

Sheila Watt-Cloutier travelled by dogsled when she was a child.

My earliest memories are being connected to the rhythms and cycles of nature through the traditional way of traveling on the dogteam through this vast, majestic, wonderful arctic land.

Sheila Watt-Cloutier, 2006



How might new and larger communities affect the caribou herds and the people who depend on them?



Voices of Canada

Inuit Families

Each family spent much of the year travelling, setting up camps wherever food was available. Extended families were very important and would gather with others when the seasons and availability of food permitted. These were times of great joy and feasting—times for stories, singing, drumming, eating, playing, and chatting.

Rachel Attituuq Qitsualik, Pond Inlet, 1999



Many Inuit continue with traditional ways, but also use modern technology. How might this be reflected in their communities?

Inuit Communities in the Past



Voices of Canada

A Way of Life Changes

In 1958, the Inuit traditional way of life began changing. The first school was opened [in Baker Lake]. Because parents did not want to be separated from their children, they started moving to the community while their children attended school. They started gathering in the settlement of Baker Lake.

*Barnabas Peryouar, Baker Lake,
1991*

Pangnirtung is beside a deep fjord on Baffin Island. It began as a whaling station.

Inuit lands have always stretched across what is now Greenland, Russia, Alaska, and Canada. The Inuit lived and worked together with their families. Elders and other adults taught young children the ways of the land, animals, and how to survive in the Arctic. Groups followed and hunted caribou, and travelled to other areas to fish, depending on the season.

Parents and grandparents had many ways to teach their children how to survive in the North. Games, songs, dances, art, and storytelling were some of the ways. During summer, families would teach their children how to make tools out of parts of seal, walrus, whale, and other animals. Children gathered eggs from the nests of wild birds on the tundra. Summer homes were tents made of seal or caribou skins. In winter, several families would camp together and make their igluit.

The arrival of Europeans in the 1800s brought changes to this way of life. New products such as guns, pots, and cloth made Inuit life easier. Many Inuit gave up their traditional lifestyle and set up permanent settlements near European whaling stations. They began working for Europeans so they could get the goods they wanted.



Making a Difference

Tracking Wildlife in Nunavut

The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) works to keep track of the wildlife in Nunavut. The project relies on youth, Elders, and scientists to ensure the protection and wise use of wildlife and the environment in Nunavut. The Elders contribute their wisdom about animals, and scientists add their scientific knowledge. This Board enables the Inuit to be involved in decision making about preserving the land and animals. They also have a say in the future development of Nunavut.

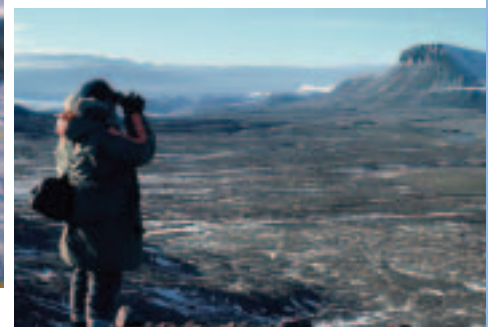
Some projects the NWMB have paid for include determining the range of caribou, the number of polar bears in a certain area, and identifying the types of whales found in the north. The NWMB provides materials to schools and a Web site for children to help them understand the importance of wildlife in the North.



The muskox is one of the animals that the NWMB studies and manages. Every year, the board rules on how many muskoxen can be hunted.

The NWMB consults Inuit hunters about wildlife in Nunavut. The hunters tell them what kinds of animals and birds they see, and where they see them.

Scientists also go out on the land to study wildlife for the NWMB.



Thinking It Through

- Why do you think it is important that organizations like the NWMB involve the Inuit in decision making?
- What role can Inuit Elders play in the work of the NWMB?

Inuit Communities Today

Inuit people live a contemporary and traditional lifestyle that includes living in modern homes, and driving snowmobiles and vehicles. Inuit people use the Internet, watch satellite TV and commonly use cellphones. Traditional ways continue to be an important part of life, and in the spring and summer, whole communities might return to the land for hunting and fishing.

Iqaluit has seen a lot of changes in the past few years. New roads, buildings, schools, and a skateboard park have been built. Here is what some Iqaluit residents think of the changes.

Thinking It Through

- What do the Voices of Canada on this page tell about life in Iqaluit? How do you think Inuit communities in the region have changed over time?



Voices of Canada

Iqaluit Today

I feel that Iqaluit has changed positively, like how the city is paving roads.

Elissa McKinnon

I think Iqaluit is becoming a very prosperous city.

Scott Flieger

There are a lot more things to do, and friendly people.

Anne Mullin

Skill Smart

- Find out more about Inuit inventions. How did these inventions affect quality of life?



The Inuit invented sunglasses. Why do you think sunglasses are a necessary item in the North?

Iqaluit: A Government Town

Nunavut is Canada's only territory where the government follows mainly Inuit traditions. Iqaluit is the capital city of Nunavut. With a population of nearly 4000, it is the largest settlement in the Arctic region. Iqaluit is the centre for government. Many of the people who live here work for the government. People who do business with the government also live in Iqaluit. Often these people only live in Iqaluit for a few years, then move back to southern Canada.

Government workers in the North might speak one of the many **official languages** in Nunavut. **Inuktitut**, English, and French are all recognized as official languages by the Nunavut territorial government.

The government in Nunavut has restored cultural traditions by working with Inuit Elders. It works on a consensus model to reach agreements, and all members work together to resolve issues.

Many Francophones work for the government in Iqaluit and live throughout the Arctic region, from Inuvik in the west, to Iqaluit in the east. Francophones living in the North come from all parts of Canada, but most are from Québec. They have a newsletter called *Le Nunavoix*. A Francophone school, the *École de Trois-Soleils*, serves the community in Iqaluit.

words matter!

Inuktitut is the language of the Inuit. It is used in homes, schools, on the radio and on TV, and by the government of Nunavut. Language and culture are very important in Nunavut, which is why Inuktitut is recognized there as an official language.



The Nunavut legislative building in Iqaluit was designed for a cold environment. How do you think this design is beneficial?



Inuit musician Susan Aglukark writes songs that show her ties to the land and to the past. She also sings songs that have been passed down through generations. How does this reflect her identity?

Radio, television, and newspapers are important ways for people to hear about their communities. The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) and CBC North provide radio and television news and entertainment to people in the Arctic region. Local shows in Inuktitut are produced by CBC North in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet. These shows cover local current events. The program *Sinnaksautit* features traditional Inuit storytelling. CBC North has a daily evening television newscast in Inuktitut called *Igalaaq*. It covers local, national, and international news. Nunavut newspapers, such as the *Nunatsiaq News* and the *Kivalliq News*, are published in Inuktitut and English. They are also available on the Internet.

More About . . .

Iqaluit Today

- 60 percent of the population of Iqaluit is Inuit.
- On January 1, 1987, the community changed its name from Frobisher Bay to Iqaluit, the name the Inuit have always used.
- For thousands of years, the site has been a camping and fishing spot. The name Iqaluit means “place of fish.”
- At the end of April, Iqaluit celebrates the coming of spring with the Toonik Tyme festival, featuring games, dogsled races, iglu-building contests, and entertainment.

Iqaluit is a fast-growing city. It is also the most northerly capital city in Canada.



Thinking It Through

- What challenges do communities in the North face? Think about how people work, travel, and communicate. What do you think might help solve these challenges?

Why Did the First Explorers Come to the Arctic Region?

Beginning in the 1500s, explorers from Europe began sailing into the waters of the Arctic region. They hoped to find a way to sail from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Their explorations into this region would lead to new discoveries and close contact with the Inuit.

The Northwest Passage

Between 1576 and 1578, Martin Frobisher, an explorer from England, made three voyages into the Arctic Ocean. Although he did not discover the Northwest Passage, Frobisher Bay is named after him.

Alexander Mackenzie learned from First Nations people about river routes to the northern sea. In the late 1700s, he explored what would become the Mackenzie River, following it to the Arctic Ocean. Although he did not find the Northwest Passage, Mackenzie became the first European to cross the continent by land, from east to west.

In the 1800s, explorers were able to map the many islands in the Arctic region. Often their ships were trapped in the ice when winter set in. Some expeditions were trapped for years, and often the sailors would rely on the local Inuit for help. Some were not so lucky. The voyage headed by Sir John Franklin, also an English explorer, would end in the deaths of himself and his crew.



Wooden ships that were used in Arctic explorations were reinforced with iron. What kinds of ships sail in the Arctic Ocean today?



Tuktoyaktuk is the Arctic trailhead of the Trans Canada Trail. This community is close to the Mackenzie Delta, which is where the Mackenzie River enters the Arctic Ocean.

Thinking It Through

- Look at the map of the Arctic region on pages 192–193. Why might it have been difficult to find a route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean?



The houses built in Qaummaarviit Territorial Historic Park were built with whale bones. This shows that people in the Arctic were hunting whales a long time ago.

More About . . .

Disease in the North

In the 1600s, only 87 diseases were known to the First Nations. There were about 30 000 diseases known to the Europeans. When the Europeans became ill, they often spread the diseases to the First Nations, who had no immunity because the sicknesses were new to them. The chicken pox and the flu often killed whole families of Inuit. How would this impact Inuit communities?

The Whalers

Before petroleum oil was used to make perfumes and fuel, whale oil was used to make these things. As early as the 1500s, whalers from Europe knew that many whales lived in the Arctic Ocean.

By the 1600s, European whalers were coming every year to the Arctic region. They began to trade with the Inuit, who were already experienced whalers. The Inuit had always used whales for food and fuel, and they now traded this skill for new things from across the ocean. They traded for tools, cloth, metal goods, and food such as biscuits.

The Inuit were also hired to be pilots, hunters, and seamstresses by the whalers. Their knowledge of the land, the water, and the many islands would be very important to the whalers.

The most important location for whaling in the Arctic region became Cumberland Sound. There, whalers established the first permanent whaling stations, and lived there year round.

Over time, the Inuit and the Hudson's Bay Company also began a fur trade. Fur from Arctic animals, such as Arctic fox, caribou, and seals, were traded for European goods.



Find Cumberland Sound and the community of Pangnirtung on the map on pages 192–193. Why do you think this location would be a good spot for a whaling community?

Living in Canada's North Today

People think of the Arctic as a very icy, snowy place. However, more snow could fall in another region of Canada than in the Arctic region! The snow that does fall stays on the ground for a long time, because the air is so cold. Some areas in the Arctic do not seem to be like Earth at all, which is why projects like the Haughton-Mars Project come to this region.



What does this photo show about summer in the Arctic region?

Effects of Dry and Cold Arctic Climate

Housing	Homes must be very well insulated.
Clothing	When people go outdoors in winter, they must wear warm clothing from head to toe.
Farming	Almost no farming is done in the Arctic. Things like flour and vegetables must be brought in by truck or plane. That can make some foods very expensive.
Travel	People use snowmobiles, planes, trucks, and boats. There are very long distances to travel in the Arctic region!

Thinking It Through

- How else could the environment in the North affect daily life? Think of what you do every day. How would a student do the same things in the North? Could they do the same things? Might they do others?



Lena Sikasluk fishes for Arctic char near her home in Pond Inlet. Ice fishing is a traditional way to fish in the Arctic region, because the water is frozen for much of the year.



Homes like these are raised off the ground to prevent warm air from melting the permafrost. Melting permafrost could make the house sink.

words matter!

The **tundra** is a treeless area in northern Canada where only grasses and small plants grow.

Permafrost

Most buildings in the Arctic region do not have basements. That is because much of the ground is always frozen.

Permafrost is soil that stays frozen all year. In summer, only the top layer of soil thaws. Permafrost has many effects on the Arctic region:

- Without deep soil, there is no farming.
- Trees will not grow in permafrost, so forestry is not a major industry here.
- In the **tundra**, rare and fragile grasses and plants have adapted to grow in the thin soil.
- Frozen ground makes road construction difficult. Airstrips and roads are built on a bed of gravel above the permafrost to prevent melting. Melting causes potholes and uneven roads.

Pollution

In southern Canada, most garbage is buried, but permafrost prevents that in the North. In the past, waste was dumped onto the frozen ground or into lakes and wetlands. In some places, sewage polluted the water. This made people and animals sick.

Today, the government has rules to help prevent this problem. Companies have to find out what effect their work will have on the environment. If it will harm the environment, it will not be approved. The use of land must be agreed on by Inuit communities and the government before companies can begin operations. Communities have recycling programs to help reduce waste.



These Inuit students in Iglulik are recycling cans. What challenges might recycling programs face in the North? Why would recycling be important in the region today?

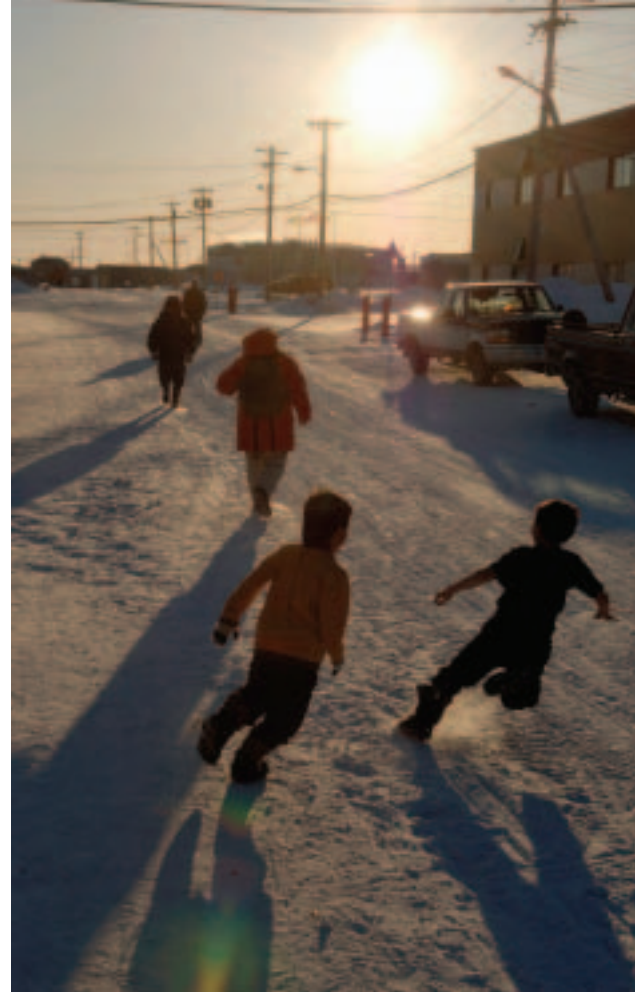
Thinking It Through

- What to do with garbage is a challenge for all communities. What are ways that improper disposal of waste can affect quality of life? What can people and governments do to help protect the environment?

Long Days, Long Nights

Imagine living in a place where in the summer, nighttime is only a few hours long, and in the winter, the daytime is just as short! The Arctic region is such a place because of its latitude. With very few hours of darkness in the summer, people can enjoy daytime activities, such as playing softball, long into the night.

In winter, it is often too cold and dark for many outdoor activities, but there are lots of indoor activities. People drive or walk to shopping malls, restaurants, and movie theatres. Children often play indoor games, or visit the library. Because of 20 hours of darkness during the winter months, students go to school in the dark!



Every year, people in the North celebrate the Festival of the Midnight Sun. This festival is held around the longest day of the year, in the summer. Why do you think people might celebrate this event?

Outdoor activities are usually enjoyed all year long by these children in Iglulik. How might the length of daylight hours affect what you do every day?



Voices of Canada

Everything Has Changed

We cannot pass on our traditional knowledge, because it is no longer reliable. Before, I could look at cloud patterns, or the wind or even what stars are twinkling, and predict the weather. Now, everything is changed.

Enosik Nashalik, Pangnirtung



This Inuit family in the Northwest Territories wears double-layer parkas, traditional clothing in the Arctic region. How might climate change affect how people dress in this region?

Thinking It Through

- Read the Voices of Canada on this page. Why do you think traditional knowledge is challenged by climate change? How might climate change affect the speakers' quality of life?

Climate Change

A few years ago, a robin appeared in the Arctic region. There is no word for robin in Inuktitut because no Inuk had ever seen one. The reason the robin appeared so far north is that temperatures are slowly getting warmer.

The Inuit also saw other things that told them the climate was changing. They noticed that wetlands were drying up. They saw insects, such as mosquitoes and beetles, which they had never seen before.

Climate change has also had a direct affect on Inuit ways of life. Melting ice meant more accidents, since people were used to travelling on thick, solid ice. Permafrost began to melt underneath homes. Storms have become more frequent. The Inuit have begun to voice their concerns. Recently, Inuit hunters and observers have worked with research organizations to track the changes. Workshops and community meetings are taking place. The information gathered is then shared with Canada and the rest of the world. The government of Nunavut is also developing a Climate Change Centre, a place where the information can be collected and organized.



Voices of Canada

Climate Change Affects the Inuit

How can the traditional knowledge and experience of the Inuit help us study climate change in the Arctic region?

Years ago, we used to travel by dog team in the middle of July over the ice, but now, by July, people are boating.

Kugluktuk, Nunavut, 1999

The weather pattern has changed so much from my childhood. We have more accidents because the ice conditions change.

David Audlakiak, Iqaluit, 2002

An Uncertain Future

Climate change has very serious effects on the lives of people and animals in the Arctic. The example of the polar bear can show how important it is to think about the ways we act in our world. Pollution in places as far away as South America and Alberta contribute to changes in the Arctic.

The big problem for the polar bears in the Arctic is that the ice they need to hunt on is melting and growing thin. This means that they cannot get to areas to hunt seals, their main source of food. One theory is that global warming is melting the ice. Gases released by burning things such as coal and gas are warming up the atmosphere. This increase in temperature is a part of the climate change being observed in the Arctic.

How do you think the loss of the polar bear might affect the people living in the Arctic region?



Polar bears spend most of their lives on the ice. What other animals in the Arctic region might be affected by climate change?



The artist who made this sculpture is Ohito Ashoona. He says that the polar bear is the “king of the ice.” What does that tell about his respect for the polar bear?



Voices of Canada

A Legendary Animal

The polar bear is central to the image of the Arctic. It’s a legendary animal in our lives. It’s spoken of with reverence. Life without it is unfathomable.

Duane Smith, Nunavut

Thinking It Through

- If the Arctic can be affected by what happens in the south, what can we do to stop the changes? In small groups, talk about this problem and make suggestions about the things you can do to help the people and animals of the Arctic.

Diamonds in the Arctic Region

More About . . .

Diamonds

Canada is the third-largest producer of diamonds in the world. Many of the workers at the mines are local people who are learning to mine diamonds. More than 2000 people in the North work directly with the diamond mines.



The people of Nunavut have discovered that their land has gold and other minerals, like zinc and copper. It also has diamonds. Already, diamond mines are providing jobs and opportunities to the people of the North. Companies are searching the waters of the Arctic Ocean for deposits of oil and gas. These too will provide work for the people of Nunavut.

While wealth does grow from mines and minerals, what problems might occur as the mining develops? What can companies do to make their mines safer for the environment in the North? Form small groups to discuss this important issue. Share your findings with the class.



This is the Jericho diamond mine, at Contwoyto Lake, in Nunavut. How do you think mines like this one might impact the local environment and the people who live nearby? Are there advantages? Disadvantages?

Thinking It Through

- What are the uses for diamonds today? Why might the discovery of diamonds mean so much to people who live in Nunavut?

What Makes Canada's Arctic Unique?

People who live in the Arctic region have combined traditional ways with contemporary ways. Many Inuit in the region still go out to live on the land, but they may use present-day equipment. In Nunavut, the government has a council of Elders to give advice about traditional ways.

Another combination of old and new ways of life is the Arctic Winter Games. Modelled after the Olympic Games, these games are held every two years. Athletes from northern nations such as Russia, Sweden, Norway, and Canada compete in games of skill.



Voices of Canada

Our Language

Within Inuktitut there are many dialects. When people are not exposed to a dialect, it can be harder to understand. But I think Inuktitut is becoming easier. When people were more isolated and had fewer contacts, it was harder to understand each other. But now with more contacts through travel, the media, and in larger communities, it is less confusing.

Nunia Qanatsiaq, Arviat



Voices of Canada

Why I Am Proud to Be Inuk

I am proud to be Inuk because we can go caribou hunting and fishing. I'm happy because we can speak Inuktitut. We can go camping on other islands and we can go dogsledding. Other people down south can't do any kind of stuff like this.

Roberta Dion, Grade 6 student, Coral Harbour



Thinking It Through

- What do the Voices of Canada in this chapter tell you about life in the Arctic region? How is it different from other regions in Canada? Choose one of the other regions in Canada to create a comparison. Explain how communities in all regions might work together to preserve their languages and ways of life.



These young women are competing in the Arctic Winter Games. What other sports in the Games are connected to traditional skills?

Are the Benefits of Drilling Oil and Gas Worth the Risk to the Environment?

On the map on pages 192–193, find the place where the Mackenzie River flows into the Beaufort Sea. Sediment flowing from the river has created the Mackenzie River Delta. This area is the largest delta in Canada, and it is made up of small islands, estuaries, and marshes. It is an important area for birds, as well as other animals. Thousands of birds migrate to the Delta every year to nest. Beluga whales come to the Delta to calve. Grizzly bears live in the area as well.



The rich land of the Delta supports many kinds of plants and animals. It is also the location of rich deposits of oil and gas.

Several large deposits of natural gas and oil have been found here. These energy sources are valuable. But in order for the oil and gas to be used, they must be found and drilling platforms built. Roads and pipelines must also be built so that workers can get to the oil platforms, and the oil and gas can be moved farther south, where most people live. This will have an impact on the environment and wildlife of the Mackenzie River Delta.



These Arctic swans are among the bird species that might be harmed by the oil development.

The bird sanctuary in the Mackenzie River Delta is important. How can we risk an area that is the only place in North America where some species of birds nest and raise their young? Drilling, roads, and more people will disrupt this special place forever.

The oil companies are committed to doing their best to protect the environment. I think we can develop this resource, give people jobs, and still protect the land and the animals.

I'm going to work as a wildlife monitor when I leave school. That means that I will go out on the land and tell the government if any animals or birds are being harmed by the oil drilling. I think that's a good way to help take care of the Delta.

Over to You

1. Discuss the different points of view. Should drilling oil and gas be encouraged? Which issues are most important to the people of the communities affected? Which issues are important to the businesses? Make a chart to share your ideas.
2. What do you think the oil companies, communities, and governments should do to preserve the environment? What might this mean to further generations?

Build Your Skills!

Make a Presentation

Climate change is a growing concern in the Arctic region. Research how the climate has changed in your community over the last 100 years. Look on the Internet or conduct interviews. Then share the information in a presentation. Look back to the Skill Power on page 197 to help plan your presentation.

Research a Current Event

Find out more about oil drilling or diamond mining in the Arctic region today. What types of discoveries are being made? What are companies doing to preserve the environment? Look on the Internet or use the library to conduct your research. Then write a newspaper article to share your facts.

Look at News Reports

Find two news reports about climate or environmental concerns in the Arctic region. Do the reports have similar opinions? Do they use interviews to support their arguments? Who wrote them? Why do you think they were written?





Putting It All Together

Once Katie had finished her research into Qaummaarviit Territorial Historic Park, she used her family's computer to create a PowerPoint display. She chose to make this presentation because it would be a good way to include photos and maps. Here is what part of her presentation looked like.



The Place That Shines

- Qaummaarviit Territorial Historic Park is on Baffin Island. It is also called "The Place That Shines."
- People called the Thule once lived there. The park protects what is left of their houses.

Review the inquiry questions for this chapter:

- Explain how different communities have adapted to the climate and geography in the region.
- Has change always been good for people in the Arctic? Explain.



Take Time to Reflect

Before you go on to the next chapter, think about what you learned in this one. If someone from the Arctic region came to visit you, how would you help them learn about your community? What would you show them? Prepare a bulleted list. Save your work for your Canada Collection.