

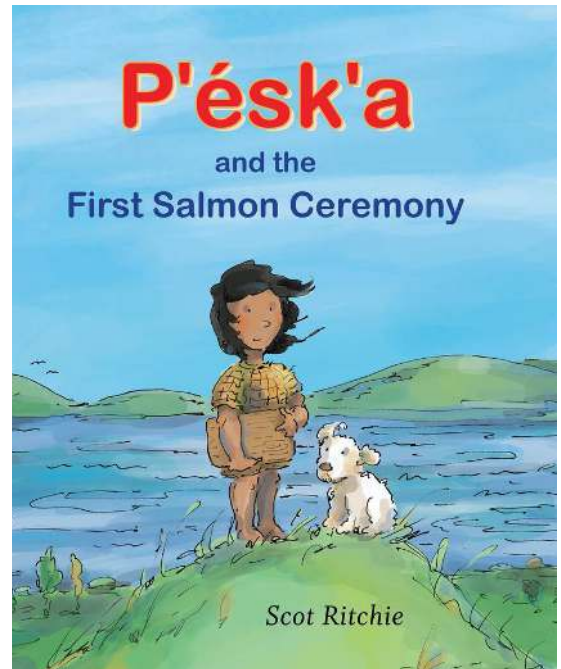
A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO P'ÉSK'A AND THE FIRST SALMON CEREMONY

Written and illustrated by Scot Ritchie

ABOUT THE BOOK

It's the day of the First Salmon Ceremony, and P'ésk'a is excited to celebrate. His community, the Sts'ailes people, give thanks to the river and the salmon it brings by commemorating the first salmon of the season.

Framed as an exploration of what life was like one thousand years ago, P'ésk'a and the First Salmon Ceremony describes the customs of the Sts'ailes people, an Indigenous group who have lived on the Harrison River in British Columbia for the last 10,000 years. Includes an introductory letter from Chief William Charlie, an illustrated afterword and a glossary.



P'ésk'a and the First Salmon Ceremony

Written and illustrated by

Scot Ritchie

JUVENILE FICTION

Reading Ages 4 to 7

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Hardcover with jacket



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ABOUT THE BOOK

Scot Ritchie is an award-winning illustrator and author with more than 50 books to his credit. His books have been translated into French, Korean, Indonesian, Polish, Finnish, Arabic and Dutch. Scot has worked with the National Film Board of Canada and has exhibited his illustrations at the National Gallery of Canada. He lives in Vancouver.



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BEFORE READING

Back in Time

Ask students, based on what they know and what they imagine, to consider the following question:
What do you think life looked like in our community 1,000 years ago?

The Sts'ailes people have a well-documented history in the area of the Harrison River in British Columbia. Find out more on their website: <http://www.stsailes.com/>

Research

Research your area prior to introducing the book to see who lived in your area 1,000 years ago. For research, you may choose to use: websites, museums, the Smithsonian Institution website (www.si.edu), Friendship Centres, local universities, Elders or knowledge keepers, or parks and historical societies. Have students use a variety of options to share their learning, such as a report, slideshow, poster, etc.

Picture Walk

A picture walk is a strategy that can be used to connect students to the text with an oral conversation as you view the story through the illustrations. Ask students: What do you notice? Record observations on a chart under the headings "People," "Objects" and "Nature."

Importance of a Shared Meal

Ask students: When are times you gather together to eat with your family? Generate a list. Explore the topic with questions like: Why do you think this is important? How does our (school) community come together to share a meal? What would it be like if we shared all that we had in our communities?

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BEFORE READING

Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainability

Indigenous knowledge / traditional ecological knowledge provide an important knowledge base for us to learn from. With students, examine the illustrations in the book and see if they can identify activities the Sts'ailes engaged in that led to sustainability. Chart these ideas.

The following is a general teaching resource from UNESCO on Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge and sustainability. This may be used to help guide discussion. http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_c/mod11.html



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DURING READING

These are guiding questions that can be discussed orally — as a shared response as a class or in small groups — or completed as individual reading responses, or a combination of all. This book should be read over a couple of days to gain the most insight from the discussions.

Point of View

As you read through the story, encourage students to decide who is telling the story. What evidence do they see to support this? Given that it is P'esk'a, who is a child, how does he view the community and the ceremony that is occurring today?

Literary Device: Flashback

A flashback is a literary device in which the writing presents events that have occurred before the present time. In this story, the author utilizes a flashback to 1,000 years earlier to give readers a glimpse into the historic tradition of the First Salmon Ceremony. Discuss with students the moment when the author uses the flashback. What does the author achieve with the use of this literary device?

Ceremonial Drums

On page 15 of the text, it says, "This is where the drums are made from wood and animal skins. P'esk'a can hear them beating clearly. 'Come to our First Salmon Ceremony,' they say." Ask students: How can the drums speak?

DURING READING

Roles in the Community

On pages 4 and 6 of the text, it says, “P’esk’a opens his eyes. Today is an important day for his people — the Sts’ailes. But the special tray needed for the ceremony has been left behind! With the tray under his arm, P’esk’a goes looking for the Siyám — the chief.” Ask students: Why do you think P’esk’a went to find the chief? Where do you think P’esk’a might be going?

A community is made up of many individuals who contribute to building the community. Ask students: What role do you play in a community? What did you notice about everyone pictured in this story? Give examples of how the different characters contribute to the community.

Why do you think everyone is needed and valued in the community? What roles do you see happening in this community? Do you see any community member sitting idle or not performing some task?

Building a Canoe

On page 9, it says, “P’esk’a is going to make his own canoe when he is older.” Ask students: Why do you think it’s important to P’esk’a to have his own canoe when he is older?

Vocabulary and Glossary

Throughout the book, there are words written in the Sts’ailes language. Collect these words on a word wall or chart as you read the book. Have students infer their meanings. At the end of the book, there is a glossary. Check students’ inferences on the Sts’ailes language vocabulary words. Have students generate a dictionary, with visuals, and practice the vocabulary. (The community is trying to revitalize their language, so this will be a great opportunity to learn some of the language.)

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AFTER READING

Fiction/Non-Fiction

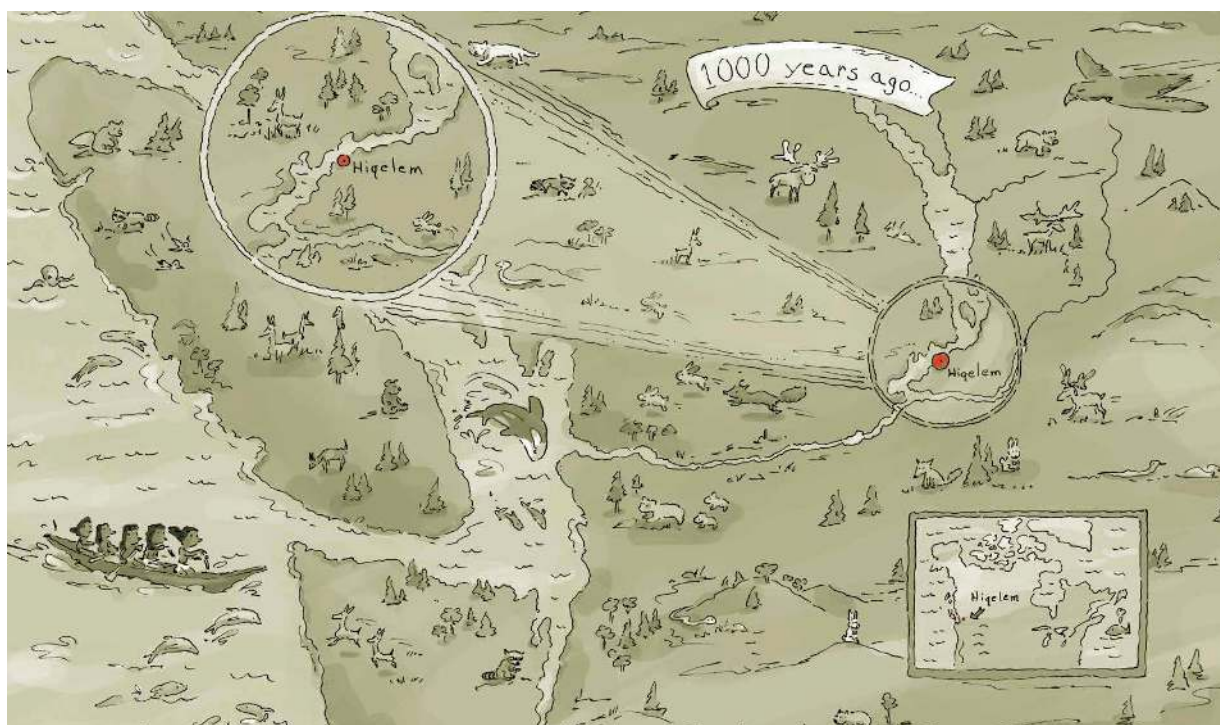
Discuss with students the use of fiction and non-fiction elements in the story. Is this fiction or non-fiction? Could it be both? Why or why not? Have students use text elements to support their answer and build criteria for both fiction and non-fiction.

First Salmon Ceremony

After the first salmon has been eaten, the bones are put on the ceremonial tray and returned to the river. Ask students: Why is it important to the Sts'ailes people to return the salmon bones to the river? Why is sth'óqwi, or salmon, so important to the lives of the Sts'ailes people?

Family Histories

Ask students: Do people in your family tell or share stories of how their culture lived long ago? Share some of the stories that you know.



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CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Discuss with students: What do you notice about the ways in which the Sts'ailes people used the resources of the land for their survival? What did they do with the leftover bones of the salmon? Did you notice anyone going without food? What do we do with our leftovers? Are there ways in which we can rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle our use of materials and food? If possible in your school building or grounds, explore composting in the classroom with either a vermicomposter or outdoor composter. How is this helpful to the environment?

Cross-curricular Connections: Science, Health

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Traditionally, Indigenous cultures around the world have lived sustainably. With students, examine the ways in which the Sts'ailes people lived sustainably based on what was available in their area.

Cross-curricular Connections: Science, Social Studies

Community Connections

As a class, explore community celebrations in your community. Have students design a poster for a celebration of their choice. Plan a celebration in your class and invite guests from the community.

Writing prompt: Why are celebrations important to us?

Cross-curricular Connections: Social Studies, Language Arts

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Connect to This Groundwood Text

A Salmon for Simon — written by Betty Waterton, illustrated by Ann Blades
ISBN 978-0-88899-276-5

Web Resources

Sts'ailes First Nation:

<http://www.stsailes.com/we-are-stsailes>

First Salmon Feast:

“First Salmon Feast.” Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, accessed September 30, 2018. <http://www.critfc.org/salmon-culture/tribal-salmon-culture/first-salmon-feast>

Native drums:

<http://native-drums.ca/en/drumming/culture>

Indigenous knowledge and sustainability:

Fien, John. “Module 11: Indigenous Knowledge & Sustainability,” Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future, UNESCO, 2010. http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_c/mod11.html