

# Shamanism The Powers of the Angakkuq

**GRADE LEVEL** This lesson plan is designed to be used with students aged 12 and up.

**OBJECTIVE** Students will continue working on their Inuktitut/English dictionary started in Lesson 1 on Shamanism. In groups of three, students will read an excerpt from “Angakkuuniq: The Powers of the Angakkuq,” *Interviewing Inuit Elders Series*, with each student taking the role of interviewer or one of the elders. As students encounter unfamiliar Inuktitut words, they will write them and their English counterparts in their dictionaries.

**TIME REQUIRED** 1½ to 2 class periods (estimated)

**MATERIALS**

- ❑ English/Inuktitut dictionary (started in Lesson 1 on Shamanism)
- ❑ “Angakkuuniq: The Powers of the Angakkuq”, *Interviewing Inuit Elders*, pages 33-40:  
<http://www.nac.nu.ca/OnlineBookSite/vol4/pdf/Chapter2.pdf>

**ACTIVITY**

- 1 Write “shaman” on the board. Ask volunteers what they remember about shamans and shamanism.
- 2 Remind students that a shaman is a mediator between the human world and the spirit world. Before the 1900s, when many Inuit converted to Christianity, shamans were doctors, healers and advisors to the Inuit.
- 3 Give students the Inuktitut/English dictionaries started in Lesson 1 on Shamanism. Ask volunteers for the Inuktitut word for “shaman” (*angakkuiᑦ*) and “helping spirit” (*tuurngaitᑦ*). Write on the board.
- 4 Ask if anyone remembers the role of a helping spirit? (*would provide the future shaman with assistance and guarantee him success in his practice*) What spirits were especially sought after? (*walrus and polar bear*) Why? (*size and ability to move in water and on land*)
- 5 Break students into groups of three and explain that they are going to read a second selection from *Interviewing Inuit Elders Series*. One student is to take on the role of the interviewer, the second student is to be Nutaraaluk and the third student is to be Aupilaarjuk (*the two Inuit elders interviewed*). As students read, they are to add unfamiliar Inuktitut words and their English equivalents to their dictionaries.
- 6 As a class, read the Introduction to the selection, stopping to add the following words to the dictionaries:
  - “qaumaniq” aura visible to animals, spirits, shamans
  - “taarniq” dark aura
  - “sakaniq” shaman’s séance
  - “irinaliutiit” incantations
  - “qinngarniq” shouted prayers.

## Shamanism The Powers of the Angakkuq (cont'd)

- 7 Review with students how most shamans began their vocations. Apprenticeship under the supervision of a recognized shaman lasted several winters and involved:
  - Initiation into the language of the spirits
  - Acquisition of “qaumaniq” (clairvoyance/aura)
  - Acquisition of “tuurngait” (helping spirits)
- 8 Have students continue reading the selection, adding words to their dictionary as they go along.

### EVALUATION

Once students have finished reading, ask for volunteers to share the words they included in their dictionaries. Write words on the board, instructing students to add any Inuktitut words they missed and correct any errors.

Ask the students if they noticed whether the elders referred to Christianity in the text. Discuss what Aupilaarjuk means when he says, “*Now I am just an ordinary person. I am following Christianity. I am just an ordinary person now.*” (p.39) Explain that once the missionaries came, the shamans were told to get rid of their “tuurngait” and accept God as the Creator.

Instruct students to save their English/Inuktitut dictionaries or collect them for future use.

### REFERENCES

Isuma Publishing – a division of Igloolik Isuma Productions: <http://isuma.ca/buy>

Kessler, Deirdre, *Isuma Teacher's Resource Guide*, Montreal: Isuma Publishing, 2004

Robinson, Gillian, *Isuma Inuit Studies Reader*, Montreal: Isuma Publishing, 2004