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Suggested Student Activities for

Joe Beetus - Hughes

Alaska
920
YKSD

The following are suggested student activities to accompany the Joe Beetus biography produced by the Yukon-Koyukuk School District. We have included a wide range of activities so teachers and students can choose those most suitable for them.

For those who have used Moses Henzie, Oscar Nictune, or any other biographies and student activities, there may be some repeats here. We are not assuming that all teachers have familiarized themselves with the Biography Series materials. Therefore, some important activities are again included. At the same time, you may want to look through the other biography materials and see if you'd like to adapt any of the activities not included here.

Hopefully students will find these exercises easy to relate to and relevant to their own lives. A number of the activities invite students to examine and compare aspects of their own village and lives to that of Joe Beetus. Perhaps these materials can be used to expand students awareness of their own environment and better understand the tremendous changes that have occurred over a relatively short span of time in the Alaskan Interior.

You will also notice a strong emphasis on using the resources within your village, namely the local experts. Encourage people to come to class and share their view of the village history. Give life to your lessons.

Most of the activities listed here have no "right and wrong" answers. They are designed to draw on student's experiences and interpretation of the world they live in. A primary goal to these exercises is to help students formulate their own answers as to why things are as they are.

Although the activities are divided by chapters and numbered, many of them would be appropriate anywhere so feel free to mix and match. We also encourage teachers to design their own activities. If you feel willing to share your creations, please write us.

All suggestions and comments from teachers and students about Joe Beetus or the student activities are appreciated. Send them to:

Yvonne Yarber and Curt Madison
Manley Hot Springs, Alaska 99756

Note: Also included is a sample teachers packet from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Some of the materials are a good supplement to the Biography Series. If you would like more copies write directly to:

(Attn: Mary Shields, Educational Division)
Alaska Department of Fish & Game
1300 College Road
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

BEFORE READING JOE BEETUS' STORIES

1. Look at the front and back cover of Joe... What can you tell about him? What can you guess? If you guessed that he's a trapper, singer and snowshoe maker you're right.
2. Look at the family tree on the inside cover and the family portrait on the following page. Using the caption for the portrait (page four in the book) and the family tree try to match up names with faces. Please note that Peggy Thompson is Joe and Celia's daughter. Both her name and Susie Williams' who is Joe's sister was forgotten on the family tree. Also, Fred Bifelt is not deceased and presently resides in Huslia.
3. Where is Hughes? Locate it on your school map of Alaska. Note it's relationship to Allakaket. Where is it relative to your village? What is the distance between your village and Hughes by land? By river? Have you ever been to Hughes? When? Why? What was it like? (If you haven't a large school map, use the map on page 10 in the book.)
4. Read the introduction on page 11. Find all the places mentioned using the map on page 10.
5. What about Hughes and Allakaket? Look through your school's collection of books on Alaska. Also use other community members as resources. (Suggested resource books: Alaska Regional Profiles Volume VI, Yukon Region; Alaska Natives and the land available from the Superintendent of Documents at the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C. 20402; Alaska Great Interior from The Alaska Geographic Society, Volume 7 Number 1, 1980. See Pages 71 and 73. Look up your own village in these books. Compare what is written with what you know about your village.

6. Condense the information you found in the preceding activity and write about Hughes (and/or Allakaket).. Later compare this with Joe's descriptions of Hughes and Allakaket.
7. English Style. Read the "Note From A Linguist" by Ron Scollon on page 5. Ask your teacher for help with words such as linguist, nuance, succinctness, semantic indirectness, narrative impact, diction and variation. Discuss with your teacher the meaning of the note from Ron. (Note to teachers: You might want to elaborate on the subject of variations in English. Unfortunately students sometimes believe that there is only one kind of English. Variations of English exist for the sake of communication. English is a living language which changes to serve the needs of people in particular situations. For example, "Village English" might be appropriate at a potlatch and perhaps not at some job interviews in Anchorage. Or, "medical English" might be appropriate at a health aide's training session but not at a birthday party.)
8. Glossary. Look over the glossary lists on page 12 and 13. Note the italicized words, they are Koyukon Athabascan. (Note to teacher: You might want to list the words on the board first to see which ones students know. For more information on the listed placenames refer students to the Dictionary of Alaska Place Names printed by the United States Department of the Interior. Also be sure all students know the definition of Koyukon Athabascan both as a people and language.

CHAPTER ONE ACTIVITIES

1. Beginning of Allakaket. How did Allakaket begin as a settlement? Find out what Oscar Nictune and Frank Tobuk have to say about the settling of Allakaket in their books by using their indexes. How, when and why did your village begin? Did it always have it's present name? Look up your village in the Dictionary of Alaska Place Names.
2. People moving. Joe's parents and grandparents moved around a lot. So did Joe as a young man. Did people move around a lot where you live? (Ask some older people to find out.) Do people move around a lot now? Why or why not. Have you ever moved? What was it like going to a new place?
3. Learning from stories. Why did Joe ask the old people to tell him stories? (page 15) What was making tea "Old Ned style"? What are the different ways students in your class know of to make fire. Does anyone in your village know a special way of making fire that he or she would be willing to demonstrate? Discuss the importance of fire and the availability of wood in your village. What are the properties of different kinds of firewood?
4. Why was it important to "talk good with people"? (page 17)
5. First language. What is meant by "first language"? What was Joe's mother's first language? What was Joe's? When did Joe learn to speak English? What is your first language? Your parent's? Your grandparent's? Did people always speak English in your village? Why didn't Joe learn to speak Eskimo? Are you around people speaking a different language than you? Which one? Can you understand anything they say in that language?

(Note to teacher: You might want to discuss why people may change from one language to another. Or, have someone from your village come in to talk about why language has changed in your area. Or, have students go home and ask why people in his or her village changed from one language to another.)

6. Joe talks about mail. (pages 19 and 20) Why didn't Joe get any mail when he was very young? Who handles the mail in your village? Where does it come from? How does it come? Do any of your fellow students get mail? Why or why not? Invite someone to class to talk about mail service to your village in the '20's' and '30's' or '40's'. How was it different from mail service now?
7. Pretend you are writing to Joe when he was ten to fifteen years old. What would you ask him? What would you tell him?
8. Used to trap. (page 20) Why did people trap out at Old Man River? Why did Joe and his family move to Hughes in 1930? Was your village ever crowded for good trapping? Are there more or less people trapping out of your village now than in 1930?
9. Hughes. See activities 3 and 5 in the first section of student activities for this book. (Before Reading...)

CHAPTER TWO ACTIVITIES

1. How did Joe's father work for wages? What does cord wood cost now in your village? How did Joe work for wages? Have each student in class list how their grandparents, parents and older brothers or sisters earned wages. Where do people in your village go to get jobs? What kind of work? Are there jobs in your village? Has it always been this way in your village? (Ask older people in your village.)
2. Job training. How was Joe trained to do the work he did? What are the young men and women in your village doing right now to be trained for jobs? What kind of work do they want to do? Where?
3. a. How is it different to find a job at home in your village rather than going somewhere else for the winter or summer to work. Does your Village Corporation have any plans to start businesses in your community that provides work? Does anyone else? Make a list of all the jobs in your village right now that people earn wages for.
- b. Work sometimes has benefits other than money. Make a class list of some of them. (i.e., developing skills, meeting people, doing something you like)
4. There are more considerations than just money when taking a job. For example, when Joe decided not to work for Archie Pringle another season. What was his reason? (Look up Archie Pringle, using the index.)
5. Sometimes people are faced with difficult choices.

Role playing activity for older students:

Situation: There are no jobs available in your village.

You're thinking about the money you'll need this winter, especially since your sno-go broke down last year.

Job offers just came to you from Galena and Anchorage but you must be willing to live in one of these places for four months. Your father is extremely ill and you could be a big help to the family if you stayed home. No one is asking you to stay but you can tell it would be appreciated. What will you do?

As a class come up with possible solutions to the problem. List them on the board. (i.e., accept the jobs and ask your cousin to look in on the family, stay home and feel angry and frustrated because of no money, stay home and find work like cutting wood or fur sewing, stay home and feel good because of...)

Divide into groups and role play the various solutions.

While role playing try to show some of the problems and benefits that might result from that decision. Once all the solutions have been acted out, follow-up with a discussion of which solutions were most comfortable and why. Was the most comfortable solution the one you really wanted to do?

6. Make a list of what a person might give up to accept a job. (i.e., give up summer on the river and fishing for eating fish and dog fish, or give up time with your family)
7. What are the costs involved in getting a job? (i.e., the cost of going to Fairbanks for an interview and paying for transportation and boarding, or the cost of tools needed as a carpenter or welder or electrician)
8. Make a list of jobs you might like to do and a list of jobs you wouldn't like to do. Have everyone hand in their lists and then compile them on the board. As a class decide what skills are needed for each of the jobs and write them on the board too.

Then, choose two or three of the jobs and find out how people learn the skills needed for them. (Do they learn on the job, at school, from books?)

9. Joe's way to make a living. List Joe's working experience. Find a couple people in your village about the same age as Joe. Find out their working experience. How is similar or different from Joe. How are the people in your village that are Joe's age making wages? (refer to activity one above)
10. Change. (Pages 31 and 32) What does Joe have to say about change. Have each student go home and find someone close to Joe's age to ask about change. Have things changed from when they were young? How and why? Do they think things will change in the future? In what ways?
11. Is Joe all work and no play? What does he say about having fun? (See page 32)

CHAPTER THREE ACTIVITIES

1. Potlatches. Find out who has been to a potlatch among students in the classroom. Where? List the different places on the board. Have students describe what went on in the different places, differences and similarities. Have students choose an area in Alaska where no one from your class has been. Write to a school in one of those areas telling them what potlatches in your village are like. Ask them to write back and tell what their potlatches are like. If there are different kinds of potlatches be sure to explain that. If you need help explaining the meaning of a potlatch and the things done there ask an older person who has put on a potlatch. Perhaps you could invite a person from the village or Native corporation or Village Council to come and speak about potlatches. How about someone to teach Athabaskan potlatch songs and dancing.
2. What are the important things done in preparation for a potlatch? What kinds of foods are gathered? What kinds of things are made? Do people help one another during potlatch time? How? Do people buy things for a potlatch? What? Did they 100 years ago? 50 years ago? If so, what?
3. Do any of the younger people in your village know Native songs? Do you and your classmates? Can you find someone in your village come and teach you a new Koyukon song? If you just aren't interested, why is that? What does Joe say about making and singing songs?
4. Joe talks about Eskimo dancers at Allakaket. There are several Eskimo families in that area. (Alatna is predominately Eskimo) Where do most Eskimo people live? (See map) Are there other villages in the Interior with Eskimo people? Refer to Oscar Nictune and Frank Tobuk for more on Eskimoes in the Interior.

OVERVIEW

1. Do a timeline of Joe Beetus' life. Compare it to a timeline of your own life. If you still have timelines of other people in this series compare those too.
2. Choose one or two things that Joe talked about that really stand out in your mind. Write about it.
3. Joe talked about several animals throughout his book. Make a list of those animals. Write what you know about those animals. Next, use the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Notebook Series find out more about each animal. Invite someone from your village who is knowledgeable of animals in your area to speak. Perhaps there is also someone in your village who can tell some of the old Athabaskan stories of animals.

6. Sno-go and dogs. When snowmachines came along they offered another option for travel. How are the snowmachines different from dogs? What did Joe say was the "toughest part with sno-go"? Use the indexes from the other biographies in this series to cross reference dogs and snowmachines.
7. Trapping with my boys. When did Joe's sons learn to trap? (page 60) What are some of the things Joe taught them about trapping? (page 65) Why is it important for Joe and his sons to stay together and check on one another while trapping? (page 67)
8. Game management. Why does Joe "save some of the fur"? (page 65) Do people in your village ever mention taking care of their traplines and "saving animals"? What would happen if a person trapped everything he or she possibly could on their trapline? Read through the Alaska Trapping Regulations No. 22 of the Alaska Board of Game and Alaska-Department of Fish and Game. What are some of the laws for your area? Do people in your village think they are fair? There are procedures for changing laws that seem unsuitable. Read page 73 of the Alaska Hunting Regulations No. 22 for submitting proposals for changes in regulations.
9. More on game. Joe voices some of his concerns about game on page 69. What does he think the difference is between town and village hunters? What do people in your area seem to think about this issue?
10. What do you feel is Joe's strongest message in Chapter Five? Illustrate that message in a poem or drawing or print.
11. Why is Joe taking his kids out in the woods while he's living?

CHAPTER FIVE ACTIVITIES

1. When Joe was young he was most interested in learning to hunt, trap and fish. What are you most interested in? Ask your parents and grandparents what they were most interested in when they were your age. How can you learn more about your area of interest? How did Joe? (page 55)
2. Making camp. (refer back to Chapter One activity #3, also see Frank Tobuk's book for reference) Have you or anyone in your class set up a camp in the woods? If so, how? How do different people in your village make camp. Describe the different kinds of camps by writing, talking or drawing. Draw a picture of the camp Joe describes on Page 56. What do you think is the most important aspect of setting up camp in the woods during the winter?
3. What did Joe say about getting lost in snow storms? Do you know of anyone in your village ever being lost in a snow storm? If so, find out what happened. If there is someone in your village who spends a lot of time out in the woods during the winter invite them to speak to your class about winter survival and precautions.
4. Families trapping. Joe Beetus used to trap with his entire family. There was a lot of work to be done and they helped one another. Joe said when they put a stop to summer school and had winter school, families no longer went out trapping. What was it like in your village? Did families use to trap? If so, when? When did they stop? Why? Who traps in your village now?
5. "Dogs was lot of work." Why are dogs a lot of work? Do you know of any one who thinks it's easy? Why? List all the work you think is involved with having a dog team for transportation.

CHAPTER FOUR ACTIVITIES

1. After trapping. (page 49) When is the end of trapping season in your area? (See Fish and Game Regulations) If there are people in your village who trap, what do they do with their time after trapping season? What are you doing at that time? (Before and after breakup) What are most people in your village doing?
2. Birch. What are the things that Joe makes out of birch? Make a list of the people in your village who make things out of birch. What do they make? Invite one of them to class who will talk about finding and working with birch. For extra credit make something out of birch yourself.
3. Learn from each other. (page 53) Do people in your village learn from each other? Did they in the past? Find someone in your class who can teach you something you don't know. Teach that person something in return. Or, ask someone in your community to teach you something new and report about it to class. (Don't be afraid to ask older people for help. A lot of them may think young people aren't interested in what they have to offer. Surprise someone!)

5. Look at all the potlatch photographs on pages 38 to 48. Think about potlatches you've been to. Draw pictures showing a few of the scenes that stand out in your mind.
6. Old time way. (page 45) Why did people come together in the spring? What do you know about Noochulogho(t)?