

# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO TUK AND THE WHALE

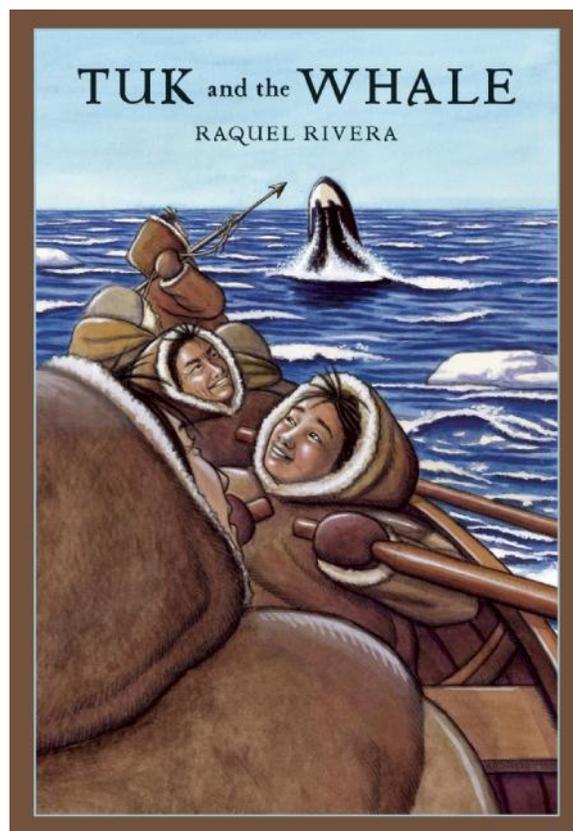
Written by Raquel Rivera and illustrated by Mary Jane Gerber

## ABOUT THE BOOK

This story is set on the eastern coast of Baffin Island in the early decades of the 1600s. Told from the point of view of a young Inuit boy, Tuk, it imagines what might have happened if the people of Tuk's Baffin Island winter camp had encountered European whalers, blown far north from their usual whaling route. Both the Inuit hunters and the whalers prize the bowhead whale, but for very different reasons. Together, they set out on a hunt, though they are all on new and uncertain ground.

Scrupulously researched, this beautifully told story will inspire extremely topical discussions about communication between two groups of people with entirely different worldviews; and about a productive partnership that also foreshadows serious problems to come.

This story highlights the differences between Inuit and Eastern whalers at the turn of the 1600s, and shows their ways of life. It also tells how people who are so culturally different can come together to support one another in times of need. Curriculum connections include History, Science, Social Studies, English and the Arts.

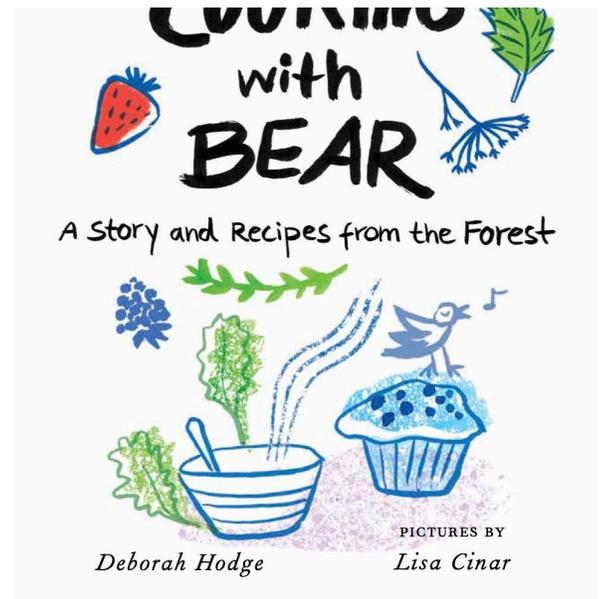


**Tuk and the Whale**  
**Written by Raquel Rivera**  
**Illustrated by Mary Jane Gerber**  
**JUVENILE FICTION**  
Reading Ages 8 to 10  
9780888998910  
Paperback

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Raquel Rivera has a degree in fine arts and has worked as a copywriter, a freelance writer and illustrator, a photographer's assistant and a teacher of English and life drawing. Raquel's work has appeared in literary journals, e-zines and web-art festivals, and she is the co-founder of the websites Site Dish and IMHO Review. Her other works include *Arctic Adventures: Tales of the Lives of Inuit Artists*, illustrated by Jirina Marton, and the novel *Orphan Ahwak*. Visit Raquel's author website at [www.raquelriverawashere.com](http://www.raquelriverawashere.com) for news, reviews and video readings. She lives in Montreal with her family.



## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Mary Jane Gerber has illustrated several books for children, including *A Gift for Ampato* by Susan Vande Griek and *House Calls* by Ainslie Manson. She lives in Orangeville, Ontario.

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## BEFORE READING

### KWL Chart

Before reading, introduce students to a KWL chart to activate prior knowledge students have about the Arctic (e.g., longer winter, ice year-round, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Inuit homelands, summer berries, whales, polar bears, no trees, etc.).

Brainstorm questions with students about what they would like to know about the Arctic region and list under the W section of the chart. This activity can be completed using a think-pair-share strategy. Have students come up with questions together and then record them as a whole group to encourage discussion.

Possible questions:

- What do Inuit traditionally eat?
- What do people in the Arctic eat today?
- What lives in the ocean in the Arctic?
- What is the temperature?
- Where do people live?
- Have there always been towns in the Arctic?
- Does the Arctic have the same seasons as the rest of Canada?
- What time of year does the midnight sun happen?
- What time of year does the sun not rise?
- Where do people hunt and what do people hunt?

Curriculum Connections: Science (Seasons, Habitats), Social Studies (Communities), Geography

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## BEFORE READING

### Vocabulary

Vocabulary from the book's glossary can be used to spark conversation with students and can be posted on a class word wall. Both the Arctic and vocabulary words can also be researched using videos to help students picture where this story takes place and what might be different about living in the Arctic in the 1600s before European contact in that region.

### Anticipation Guide

Have students answer true or false to the following statements and provide details to support their answers.

- The Arctic is the most northern part of Canada.
- Trees grow in the Arctic.
- Arvik is an Inuit word for whale. You can find Arvik in the community where you live.
- The Arctic has four seasons and is the same as the rest of Canada.
- Inuit used to be nomadic and lived on the land in the Arctic. This has now changed.
- Whales are easy to catch.
- Whales are a primary food source in the Arctic region.

Curriculum Connections: Social Studies (Communities, Celebrations, Culture), Geography, History (European Exploration/Expansion)

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## BEFORE READING

### Text Features

Using the book *Tuk and the Whale*, begin with a “text-feature walk” to build literacy skills. Show students different features of the text such as pictures, titles, significant words and the glossary to help them make connections, prepare to read the associated text and improve their understanding.

Students can activate their prior knowledge by discussing text features and what they already know about some of the features that come up. Ask them to make predictions together about what the story is about, and help each other form mental images about the setting, characters and storyline.

Students can complete think-pair-shares with an elbow partner before beginning a

Read Aloud with the class. They can then share ideas with the class to confirm predictions made.



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## DURING READING

### Focus Question

Model a Think Aloud using the focus question: “How are Inuit and the Qallunaat both on uncertain ground?” Make predictions and confirm as the story is read aloud.

### Building Vocabulary

Record new words on the Smartboard or on chart paper (e.g., Arvik, floe edge, kamotiq, umiak, qallunaat, kamik, maktaaq, ice floe). To learn more about Inuit and Inuit culture, research these new words with students using trips to the library, books, videos ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) and the Inuit Cultural Online Resource Center website ([www.icor.inuuqatigiit.ca](http://www.icor.inuuqatigiit.ca)). Words can be posted on a class word wall as a visual reference or listed on handouts for students.

### Discussion Questions

- Why have the Qallunaat arrived in the Arctic?
- Why do both Inuit and Europeans value the bowhead whale?
- Why is it important for them to work together?

### Story Frame

The story frame may be completed during reading or after reading.

The problem in the story is \_\_\_\_\_

This is a problem because \_\_\_\_\_.

The problem is solved when \_\_\_\_\_

In the end \_\_\_\_\_.

Note to Teachers: Visit the following website for the story frame and additional graphic organizers.

[www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org)

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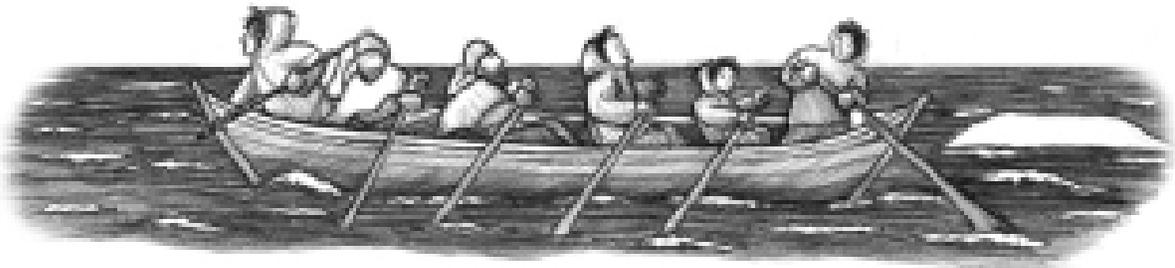
## DURING READING

### Sharing Circle

**“Just yesterday I was scared of those Qallunaat ... then today, out on the water they became like friends.”**

**In a circle everyone is of equal importance. All members of the circle have a gift to share and are important and valued.**

Have students sit together in a circle and explain to them the importance of the circle to many Indigenous Peoples. Ask students to each take a turn sharing their own experiences of something that they were scared of but then with which they found common ground or understanding. Students can use the statement “Yesterday I was scared of \_\_\_\_\_, but today \_\_\_\_\_” as needed to help them begin their sharing. Teachers should model how to do this first. Students can use the right to pass if they choose not to speak.



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## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

- Tuk's family is concerned about the boat that has shown up close to their home and the changes that it may bring. Have you been in a similar position? What kinds of changes would you like to see in your town and what would you like to remain the same?
- In the story, Tuk's family and friends must make a decision — to help the newcomers and work together or to work alone. Have you ever been in a similar situation?
- Give examples from the text that highlight appreciation for nature and the environment.

Curriculum Connections: Social Studies (Communities, Culture), Indigenous Studies, Science (Climate Change, Biodiversity)



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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Print and Web Resources

Allootook, Ipellie. *The Inuit Thought of It: Amazing Arctic Innovations*. Toronto: Annick Press, 2007.

Cunningham, Kevin, and Peter Benoit. *A True Book: The Inuit*. Toronto: Scholastic Canada, 2011.

KWL charts:

“K-W-L Charts.” Facing History and Ourselves, accessed November 18, 2018.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/k-w-l-charts>

Sharing circles:

“Talking Circles.” First Nations Pedagogy, accessed November 18, 2018.

<http://bit.ly/2PvOCv8>