



# Canoes

## Lesson Plan 1: Coast Salish Canoes

### Hands-On

#### Materials:

- Shovel-nose river canoe
- Travelling canoe
- Student Background.
- OSPI booklet - Herbie & Slim Nellie's First Journey
- OSPI booklet – Building of a Canoe

### Guiding Questions

- Why is it important to perpetuate traditions?
- What contributions have been made to transportation by the Coast Salish tribes?
- What are some of the important traditions surrounding the canoe?

### Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of natural resources used by Native Americans for transportation
- Students will understand how Coast Salish peoples have depend on canoes for transportation, food gathering, recreation, and other cultural needs
- Students will understand the different types of canoes developed by Coast Salish peoples

### Online Resources:

- Video interview with George Swanaset Sr., Nooksack Master carver  
<http://bit.ly/2CR9i96>

### Activities

1. Examine two models and/or photos of canoes.
2. Observe: shapes, materials, details, sizes.
3. Watch [interview](#) with George Swanaset Sr.
4. Read Student Background about canoes.
5. Go out to playground and, with chalk, draw actual length of the two canoes: Shovelnose canoe (18'-40'), Travelling canoe (40'-50')

### Classroom Based Assessments (CBA's)

Humans and the Environment  
GLE 3.1.1

Cultural Contributions  
GLE's 4.2.2, 5.1.2, 5.4.2

**Assessment: Humans and the Environment CBA**

**Geography GLE 3.1.1** Understands and applies how maps and globes are used to display the regions of North America in the past and present

- Uses maps of the Salish Sea to explain the interaction between indigenous peoples and their environment.

**Assessment: Cultural Contributions CBA**

**History--GLE 4.2.2--** Understands how contributions made by various cultural groups have shaped the history of the community and world

- Explains the technology of canoe building as contributions made by the people of the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribes
- Explains the contributions to transportation made by the Coast Salish tribes

**Social Studies Skills-GLE 5.1.2—** Evaluates if information is clear, specific, and detailed.

- Determines whether there are details to support a conclusion about canoes as a cultural contribution of the Nooksack Indian Tribe to your community
- Determines whether there are details to support a conclusion about salmon recovery activities as a contribution of the Lummi Nation in your community.

**Social Studies Skills-GLE 5.4.2-**

- Prepares a list of resources, including the title and author for each source.

***In a paper or presentation, you will:***

1. Describe the technology and role of canoes in Coast Salish culture
  2. Draw a conclusion using at least two clear, specific, and accurate examples in a presentation about how different tribes met their needs.
  3. Prepare a list of resources, including the title and author for each source.
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## Facts for Kids: Types of Canoes

Northwest Coast people are known for their carved cedar canoes. Canoes were the major way the Coast Salish People traveled long ago. Today many new canoes are being carved and paddled to celebrations and races along the Northwest Coast.

Two models of cedar canoes are included in this *People of the Salish Sea* kit. All of these types of canoes are traditional designs that are still made today. The canoes in the kit are carved by local Master carvers, Felix Solomon from Lummi Nation and George Swanaset Jr. from the Nooksack Indian Tribe.

### The Three Types of canoes

1. **Travelling (or ocean-going) canoe:** Travelling canoes are created by hollowing out a single log, usually western red cedar. They have a raised prow often decorated with carved figures. These are 40 to 50 feet long. They are used in both freshwater and saltwater.
2. **Shovelnose canoe (or river canoe):** Shovelnose canoes are medium-sized river canoes, 10 to 40 feet long with a rounded prow and stern and flatter bottoms to handle swift river currents. Like travelling canoes, shovelnose canoes are created by hollowing out a single log, usually western red cedar. Before canoe carvers had metal tools to use, they used fire and steam as well as wood and stone tools. It was a slow process—good canoes could take many weeks to make and thus were highly valued.
3. **Racing (or war) canoe (no model included):** Racing canoes of different lengths can hold 1, 2, 6, or 11 pullers. The regular 11-man canoe is approximately 50 feet long. (It's called that but women do canoe racing too.) There 6-man canoe, 2-man canoe and, and 1-man canoe Participants include both Washington tribes and British Columbia First Nation bands. Today racing canoes are still made out of cedar and fiberglass.

*Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Indian Education Office,  
Native Unity project. Native American Canoes in Washington, Maria Parker Pascua*

For more information about canoes, students can check out the Burke Museum website:

[Canoes on the Web, online curriculum](#) or <http://www.burkemuseum.org/static/canoes/>

## Teacher Background: Types of Canoes

### 1. Travelling or ocean-going canoe (model included)

The Ocean-going canoe is a freight canoe that ranges from approximately 22 - 40 feet. It has a definite verticalness or squared-off line at the place where the bow turns up. Freight canoes can be used for moving household possessions on calm water. In the past, planks were sometimes laid across two canoes to increase the carrying space when moving family and cargo to seasonal camps. The cross plank feature also stabilized the loaded canoes. Sometimes planks were set on canoes to make a dance platform for special canoe landings and ceremonies.

### 2. Shovel-nose or river canoe (model included)

The Shovelnose canoe, or river canoe, is fishing/hunting canoe. The Shovelnose canoe is made for rivers and lakes. The canoes are smaller and have narrower hulls with more of a rounded line where the bow turns up. The bow is also angled a little higher than the freight canoe's bow. Fishing canoes are built small, intended usually for only one or two people, including a sterns man paddling and steering in the back, and a spearman at the bow for shallow water fishing (skates, crabs, flounders, salmon and cod fish eggs). This craft is maneuvered better by poling, or using the specially designed tip less, notched-out paddles that make it easier to push off limbs or rocky beds. Spears can also be used to pole in these canoes. Upriver fishing can be done with a sterns man steering the canoe while a spearman in the bow lunges his spear straight down at the targeted fish. Navigation is possible, even if the river is rocky and full of rapids. Shovelnose canoes were traditionally used in the Nooksack River, Whatcom County estuaries and streams, as well as in other rivers that flow into the Salish Sea.

### 3. Racing or war canoe

One of the innovations in canoeing was the development of the **racing canoe**. With a bow patterned after the ocean-going canoe and built long and narrow for racing, the Coast Salish creative culture produced this more modern canoe tradition. Racing canoes are approximately 50' for a regular 11-man crew. Canoe racing entries range from the 11-man, 6-man, double and single canoe races. Participants include both Washington tribes and British Columbia First Nation bands. Racing itself, though, is not a new concept. Some tribes traditionally held sealing canoe races in which the participants raced from one point to another, flipped the canoe over, righted it, climbed back inside, bailed if necessary and then finished the race. This type of race also displayed the crew's ability to handle their craft. Some tribes have river canoe races with an innovative "outboard" canoe. And of course, today, there is quite a canoe race circuit for our present day canoe races, many of which are held in conjunction with annual tribal celebrations. All of the racing canoes have names.

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## **Paddles**

Paddles used for canoes continue to be made of maple or yew. (Paddles are actually designed to fit the individual, so paddle size is relative to the paddler.) Women's paddles are shorter and have a broader, rounder blade. Paddles were made with a separate handle. Paddles for larger, stronger ocean-going canoes were made for steering in rough water.

## **Bailers**

Several styles of bailers are used for the Straits/Sound canoes. The first type can be made from alder, maple, willow or laurel. These wooden bailers have a handle and the bailer part is diamond shaped, though some had a more oval quality, about 9" long, 5-7" wide and 1-11" deep. Another type of bailer can be made from fresh cedar bark. The bark is folded up on two ends, with the outer bark on the inside of the bailer. The ends are fluted or pleated (like gathering material when sewing) and a separate handle is attached. Canoes had an extra base in the inside bottom of the canoe that was made of wood with a hole designed for using masts and sails.

## **Care of a Canoe**

Canoes are kept polished and maintained. They are stored, bottom side up, elevated from the ground by laying them across logs, rollers or, more recently, sawhorses. Traditional carved canoes need to be covered with mats, boards, branches and tarps, or kept in the shade to protect them from the elements as they are very susceptible to cracks and checking. Sometimes whaling canoes were given exceptional treatment, stored in the off-season right in the owner's house to prevent any weather damage.



**Felix Solomon Creating Shovel Nose Canoe**



Felix Solomon's Carving Tools





## Master Carver Felix Solomon Teaches Children How Canoes Are Made







# Canoes

## Lesson Plan 2: Pulling Together

### Hands-on Materials:

- *Ten Rules of the Canoe* handout. (Located in Canoe Curriculum notebook.)

### Online Resources

- Video: Meet Nooksack children who race canoes.  
<https://tinyurl.com/y6w3xqbp>
  - Video: Lummi Canoe Journey  
<https://tinyurl.com/y7c2ku9n>
- Pulling Together* documentary.  
<http://bit.ly/2CRd0iW>

### Classroom Based Assessments (CBA's)

Cultural Contributions  
GLE's 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 3.2.2

### Guiding Questions

- What are some of the important traditions surrounding the canoe journeys?
- How are canoe pulling events and health issues connected for Coast Salish peoples?
- What can we learn about ourselves by studying Coast Salish canoe culture?

### Objectives:

- Students will learn about current cultural practices of canoe events.
- Students will understand how canoe events build life skills.

### Activities

1. Introduce the continuation of canoe traditions in both Lummi and Nooksack tribes.
2. Watch [Meet Nooksack Children Who Race Canoes](#).
3. Read *Ten Rules of the Canoe* handout. Discuss—ask students which rules they think are the most important
4. Watch [Lummi Canoe Journey](#) story on YouTube.
5. Watch [Pulling Together](#) on YouTube.
6. Discuss with class what can be learned from canoe traditions: What are some ways we can work together?
7. Ask students to write about something in their culture that works when people pull together on behalf of the community.

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## ***Assessment: Cultural Contributions CBA***

**Civics GLE 1.1.1** Understands the key ideals of unity and diversity.

- Explains that the Whatcom County community is made up of people from various cultures.
- Explains the benefits of diversity for a community, including the increased range of viewpoints, ideas, customs, and choices available.

**Civics GLE 1.1.2** Understands and applies the key ideals of unity and diversity within the context of the community.

- Explains the diverse perspectives of cultural groups in the community.
- Contributes one's own diverse cultural perspective to the classroom community.

**Geography 3.2.2** Understands the cultural universals of place, time, family life, economics, communication, arts, recreation, food, clothing, shelter, transportation, government, and education.

- Explains the variety of ways that native people in northwest Washington State use language to communicate, including spoken, written, sign, and body language in the past or present.
- Compares the forms of literature, music, art, dance, and games that belong to cultures in Whatcom County
- Compares the traditions, beliefs, and values of cultural groups in North America.
- Explains how children gain knowledge formally through school and informally through family, friends, and media.
- Explains the variety of ways that people in one's community use money or trade to meet their needs and wants.

***In a paper or presentation, you will:***

1. Describe how the Coast Salish cultures use canoe pulling to unite their people.
  2. Describe the benefits of "pulling together" in the canoes. Write about something in their culture that works when people pull together on behalf of the community.
  3. Draw a conclusion using at least two clear, specific, and accurate examples in a presentation about how different tribes
  4. Prepare a list of resources, including the title and author for each source.
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## Teacher Background: Canoe Journeys

### History & Tradition

A Tribal Canoe Journey is a celebrated event for the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Each year, a different Nation hosts other indigenous Nations who journey from the coasts of Alaska, British Columbia and Washington. These are a sequence of canoe journeys taken up by canoe families, nations and groups who travel in ocean-going canoes – either authentic replicas of traditional canoes, made out of solid cedar logs or various replicas using more modern techniques and materials. When the destination or host Nation is finally reached (often after many weeks of travel), the journey is celebrated with feasting, dancing, and a traditional potlatch that lasts for several days. Along the way, canoe families are hosted in traditional villages and small towns following their local tribal customs. The Tribal Journey is a revival of the traditional method of transportation and is an important cultural, spiritual and personal experience for all the participants.

The cedar canoe has long been a part of Northwest Coast culture. Once used as both transportation and as a spiritual vessel, the canoe tradition faded with the use of motorboats in the late 1800s. A canoe renaissance has occurred during the last twenty years, however, bringing the canoe back to its place in Northwest Native culture. Two major events marked the return of the canoe tradition. The first was in 1985 when Haida carving master Bill Reid carved a canoe based on the measurements taken from a canoe housed in the a museum collection. The second was the journeys that began in 1986 from one Nation to another. The Journeys were more than just traveling from one tribe to another; they were a call to all the Northwest Coast Nations to come together and revive the role of the canoe. Through these journeys, a cultural resurgence took place and the canoe became a symbol for healing, community and cultural revival.

The objective was to take the canoe, its rules and protocols, and begin to work with these communities to restore traditional practices and culture to these communities. Leaders of Indian tribes and First Nations wanted to build native pride and structure – a knowledge base upon which to build a working culture.

Since 1995, the Canoe Journey has grown from three canoes and 50 participants to over 100 canoes and over 6,000 participants from the U.S., Canada, Hawaii, New Zealand, Japan, the Philippines and working our way east across.

In 2007, Lummi Nation hosted the canoe journey. The *Lummi Canoe Journey* story was features on KVOS YouTube, and can be seen at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmmxKzS19Z8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmmxKzS19Z8)

Sources: Tribal Canoe Journey website: <http://tribaljourneys.wordpress.com>  
Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribal\\_Journeys](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribal_Journeys)

# Ten Rules of the Canoe

*How to Pull with Pride and Purpose for a Tribal Journey*

***Rule One: Every stroke we take is one less we have to make.***

Keep going! Even against the most relentless wind, somehow a canoe moves forward.

***Rule Two: There is to be no abuse of self or others.***

Respect and Trust cannot exist in anger. It has to be thrown overboard, so the sea can cleanse it.

***Rule Three: Be flexible.***

The adaptable animal survives. If you can't figure one way to make it, do something new.

***Rule Four: The give of each enriches all.***

Every story is important. The bow, the stern, the skipper cannot move without the power puller in the middle---everyone is part of the journey.

***Rule Five: We all pull and support each other.***

Nothing occurs in isolation. In a family of the canoe, we are ready for whatever comes. When we know we are not alone in our actions, we also know we are lifted up by everyone else.

***Rule Six: A hungry person has no charity.***

Always nourish yourself. The gift of who you are only enters the world when you are strong enough to own it.

***Rule Seven: Our experiences are not enhanced through criticism.***

Who we are, how we are, what we do, why we continue all flower in understanding. Withdrawing the blame acknowledges how wonderful a part of it all everyone really is.

***Rule Eight: The journey is what we enjoy.***

Although the state is exciting and the conclusion gratefully achieved, it is that long, steady process we remember.

***Rule Nine: A good teacher always allows the student to learn.***

We can berate each other, try to force each other to understand, or we can allow each paddle r to gain awareness through the ongoing journey.

***Rule Ten: When given a choice at all, be a worker bee – make honey!***