

Teaching Materials for Skeena Salmon Exhibit:

Where Salmon and People Meet

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Why are salmon important to our communities and culture?

EXHIBIT INFORMATION:

“Salmon are one of the main reasons many of us are here in the Skeena Watershed. They are the foundation for many of our communities and cultures. Salmon inspire and sustain us. The Skeena Salmon Art Show is an annual exhibition dedicated to the cultural and ecological importance of the Salmon.” - Skeena Salmon Arts Fest

PRE-VISIT CONNECTION ACTIVITIES

Outcome of activities: “river” of notecards and drawings around the classroom.

Materials needed: two colours of notecard, tape, pencils/pencil crayons, blank paper, printed blank crosswords.

Activate prior knowledge:

- Put the essential question somewhere visible, and read it aloud to the students to preface learning.
- Ask students “*what do you already know about salmon?*”.
- Have students draw or write what they already know on a white notecard. Tape all of the notecards to one wall/whiteboard in the classroom in the shape of a flowing river.

Learn about the salmon life cycle:

- Show this video: [Salmon Life Cycle for Kids \(5 min video\)](#)
- Have students complete this crossword (independently or teams): [Salmon Life Cycle Crossword](#) (also in PNG format at the end of this document).
- [Salmon Life Cycle Crossword Answers](#)
- Give students a different colour of notecard and have them draw or write a response to the question: *what is one surprising thing I learned today about salmon?* Add these notecards to the notecard “river”.

Frontload vocabulary:

Suggestion: separate students into four groups and have them complete a jigsaw activity (each group becomes an expert on their own definition, and then “teaches” the other groups).

- Culture
Culture is the way people live, including their food, stories, art, and traditions. For many

Indigenous Nations and local communities, salmon are a big part of culture. People hold salmon feasts, tell salmon stories, make salmon art, and pass down knowledge about how to catch and respect salmon.

- **Community**

A community is a group of people who live or work together and help each other. Salmon bring communities together. People fish for salmon, share them at meals, and work to protect the rivers where salmon live. Salmon help build strong connections between people, nature, and tradition.

- **Watershed**

A watershed is an area of land where all the water flows into the same river or ocean. Salmon live in watersheds. They are born in streams, travel to the ocean, and come back to spawn in the same place. If a watershed is healthy, salmon can survive. If it's damaged, salmon struggle. We need to take care of watersheds to take care of salmon.

- **Skeena**

The Skeena is a powerful river in northern British Columbia, and it's one of the most important salmon rivers in the country. Many people, animals, and plants depend on the Skeena River and its salmon. The river is part of who we are — it shapes our culture, our communities, and how we live with the land.

Discuss the relationship between salmon, people, and environment (think-pair-share or group brainstorm):

- Topic suggestions about the relationship between salmon and people:
 - *Communities of people are sustained by salmon*
 - *Salmon are a sacred symbol to many Indigenous cultures*
- Topic suggestions about the relationship between salmon and the environment:
 - *Bears, river otters, wolves and eagles are sustained by salmon*
 - *Salmon carcasses provide nutrients to streamside forests*
 - *Juvenile salmon eat insects*
 - *Salmon require cold clean water (glaciers, lakes, rivers, rain, snow)*
- Have students draw pictures (or write words) of who/what is affected by salmon, and add them to the “shore” of your notecard “river”.

Preface upcoming learning:

- On another colour of notecard, have students draw or write a response to the question: *what do I wonder about salmon?* Add these notecards to the notecard “river”.

POST-VISIT REFLECTION ACTIVITIES

Outcome of activities: river completed.

Materials needed: a third colour of notecard, tape, pencils/pencil crayons or other materials, printed salmon templates.

Reflection on new learning:

- Sharing circle: make a circle and ensure that no one is in front or behind anyone else. Explain that a sharing circle is an Indigenous method of learning, and it's just as important of a job to be a listener as a speaker. Teachers can pre-read about circle pedagogy and protocol here: <https://passthefeather.ca/sharing-circles/>.
- Have students go in a circle to respond (or pass) to the following questions:
 - *Which art piece grabbed your attention? What did it make you feel? What did it teach you about salmon?*
 - *Why are salmon important to our communities and culture?* This is the essential question. Remind students that there are SO many possible right answers!

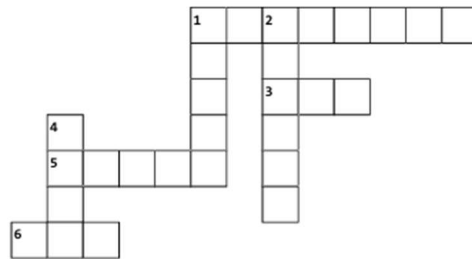
Art activity: Coloured Salmon

1. Print a salmon outline for each student (in PNG format at the end of this document.)
2. Using the teacher's medium of choice (collage, pencil crayon, etc), and have students fill in their salmon outline (or use the outline as a reference to make their own salmon outline) with pictures and/or words that represent their response to the essential question.
3. Students will cut out their template when they are done and add their fish to the "river".

Final closing piece:

- Were the students' original note card questions answered? Do class research to find all of the missing answers.

Salmon Life Cycle Crossword



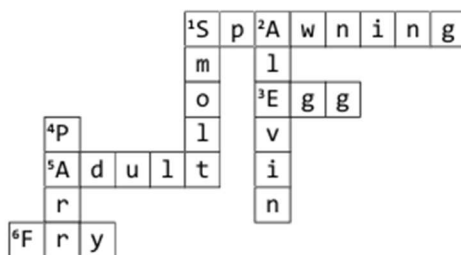
Across

- 1.** Stage 7: the grown-up salmon now migrate back to the river where they were born, where they lay eggs in the gravel to start the life cycle again. After this, most salmon die. Their bodies help feed the land, animals, and plants. What do you call a salmon at this stage?
- 3.** Stage 1: salmon start as tiny, round eggs in the gravel at the bottom of a river or stream. The eggs are usually orange and have a little black dot in the middle — that's the baby salmon growing inside! What do you call a salmon at this stage?
- 5.** Stage 6: now the salmon are all grown up. They live in the ocean for many years as they grow bigger and stronger and prepare to have babies. What do you call a salmon at this stage?
- 6.** Stage 3: once the yolk sac is gone, the salmon becomes a small fish that starts to swim around and look for food like bugs in the water. They stay in the stream where they were born for a year or more. What do you call a salmon at this stage?

Down

- 1.** Stage 5: the salmon's bodies start to change so they can survive in salty water. They lose their stripes that help them hide, and they become shiny silver instead, which confuses predators. Then they migrate downstream to reach the ocean. It's a big journey! What do you call a salmon at this stage?
- 2.** Stage 2: the baby salmon hatch from the egg, but still have a yolk sac (like a lunch bag) attached to their bellies. They stay hidden in the rocks and absorb their food from the yolk sac until they are ready to swim. What do you call a salmon at this stage?
- 4.** Stage 4: the baby salmon develop special dark stripes on their sides that help them hide from predators. They live in fresh water for a few years and keep growing stronger before their big trip to the ocean. What do you call a salmon at this stage?

Salmon Life Cycle Crossword



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