

Traditional Inuit Shelters

Name of Student: Dorianna Malliki

Grade: 7

Project Name: Traditional Inuit Shelters

Describe your project:

My project is about traditional Inuit shelters, like igloos, skin tents, and sod houses. My project is also about things you find inside shelters, like traditional sleeping bags and quilliqs. I also have information on tools used to build the shelters.

Resources: How did you find your information?

Most of the information in my project came from my family, especially my mom, dad, and grandfather. I also used books, the internet, and my teacher.

What did you find out as a result of your research?

One of the interesting things I learned was that the Inuit people today can build igloos on the land if they get lost and need shelter. I also learned more about the tools that were used to make igloos, like the snow knife.

Describe your personal interest in the project and why you chose it.

I am interested in Inuit shelters because I have built igloos with my dad on the land. I have also learned about igloos in school, so I wanted to learn more about the subject.



Building an Igloo

Building an igloo is fun but it takes a lot of work. I'm pretty good at it. I've built about 10 igloos in my life. I've learned the art of igloo building from my grandfather and my dad. It is important for everyone to know how to build an igloo in case we get lost out on the land. It is important to have shelter if the weather is bad. An igloo will keep us warm until someone finds us. I enjoy playing with my nephews and nieces inside an igloo. We play games. It is important for the children of Repulse Bay to experience what it is like to build and live inside an igloo because this is an important part of our culture and heritage.

Shelter

A winter home was important for surviving the freezing Arctic temperatures. Traditional Inuit built snow houses called igloos. Strong igloos can be made from snow that had become hard enough to stand on without breaking through. An igloo can be built almost anywhere in the Arctic. The entrance to the igloo is sometimes built below ground level to help keep cold air from getting in.



This is a picture of Inuit people building an igloo.

How to build an igloo:

An igloo is made of rectangular snow blocks that are about 10 centimeters thick. These blocks are arranged in a circle to form the base of the igloo. A second layer of blocks is built on the top of the first layer, and so on. The many layers of blocks are angled inward to form a dome shape. When finished, the snow dome is strong enough for an adult to stand on without breaking through. A block of lake or ocean ice can be used to let light through.

To make the igloo windproof, cracks between the blocks are filled in with loose snow. Sometimes the outside of the whole igloo is packed with even more loose snow. An entrance tunnel is carved underground to keep cold air out. A small porch of snow blocks is built over this entrance to provide protection from freezing temperatures and wind. An opening in the roof of an igloo allows cold air to escape before it has a chance to get inside the igloo.

A qaggiq was an igloo large enough to hold all members of the camp/group of families that gathered together during special times.

This is a picture of me holding a snow knife used to make igloos.



This is a picture of a traditional sleeping bag.

Sleeping Bags

They were traditionally made from caribou skin. They were usually large enough for two or more people, which was warmer than sleeping alone. Inside the igloo, a snow platform was made and covered with twigs and then layers of thick animal skins before placing the sleeping bag on top.

A Quilliq

A quilliq is a bowl carved from soapstone. It is filled with seal oil and becomes a lamp that provides light and heat inside the igloo or tent. One end of a wick is made from moss dipped into the bowl of seal oil. The bow-drill tool can be used to produce fire.

Quickly rotating the stick while it is pushed down creates friction, which produces enough friction to start a fire.



This is a picture of a skin tent.