

Weather or Not!

Developed By	Willie Reid
Suggested Length	Four 50 minute lessons
Suggested Grade Level(s)	2, 3
Subject Areas	Social studies, visual arts, science, physical education

Overview

Young students love the joys and mysteries of winter and will respond with excitement to activities that deal with such aspects of the season as weather changes, seasonal influences on daily life, and a celebration of snow.

Links to Curriculum Outcomes

Students will (be expected to)

- identify and describe the climate of their province and region (social studies)
- explore ways in which people are influenced by physical environment (social studies)
- examine art works from past and present cultures for various purposes (visual arts)
- recognize the role and contribution of science in their lives (science)
- create and perform simple physical patterns (physical education)

Links to Telling Stories: Themes / Key Words

- winter in rural Canada
- colours and emotions
- change of seasons

Art Works

- *In Charlottetown, Falconwood Park*, Robert Harris, CAG H-2154
- *Miss McLeod's, Upper Hillsborough*, Robert Harris, CAG H-191
- *Gunderwalt*, Robert Harris, CAG H-8135
- *Field, B.C.*, Robert Harris, CAG H -8128
- *Sullivan House*, Robert Harris, CAG H-1924
- *Untitled*, Robert Harris, CAG H-2227
- *Charlotte-town from our Drawing Room Window*, Margaret Beazley, CAG 90.8 b

Context

This unit would be an appropriate complement to lessons taking place during the autumn to winter transition and during the winter months.



Lesson #1: Watch this Space - Season in Transition

Objective Students will predict what will happen in the first of the Harris images as the weather gets colder, compare the autumn and winter landscapes, and depict seasonal change through the “dressing” of a classroom tree. This particular lesson might be used in association with the Grade 2 Unit entitled All About Trees.

Related Art Work(s)

- *In Charlottetown, Falconwood Park*, Robert Harris, CAG H-2154
- *Miss McLeod's, Upper Hillsborough*, Robert Harris, CAG H-191

Materials

- a sturdy, medium-sized, bare-limbed tree (obtain permission before removing from the environment) or
- a class made science tree fashioned from found objects such as stacked paint cans or cardboard tubes and strong wire
- tissue or construction paper in various autumn colours
- white paper
- cotton batting
- scissors

Activities

1. Students might observe the autumn Harris work first, making predictions as to what will happen in the scene as the cold weather approaches. Some guiding questions might be:
 - What would you be wearing in this picture?
 - What activities might you engage in?
 - Will these trees die as the weather gets colder?
 - What kinds of animal activities will be taking place in and around these trees in this season?
2. Then, in a comparison of the two images (one depicting autumn, the other, winter) children might discuss ways in which change in the weather affects all living things and, in the case of humans, such things as what we wear and how we play.

3. After examining the vibrant colours of the autumn image, children might design their own class tree and, according to the knowledge they have acquired in science, create various types of leaves. As winter approaches, they might cover the bare limbs with cotton batting or snowflakes. It could become a tree for all seasons and reasons.

Ideas for Assessment

Students might wish to prepare sketches of their tree, various leaves, or snowflakes as well as jotting notes and observations around the seasons in a journal or scrapbook.



Lesson #2: Snow Sleuths

Objective Students will explore aspects of the states of water through collecting, recording, and reporting on the science of snow.

Related Art Work(s)

- *Gunderwalt*, Robert Harris, CAG H-8135
- *Field, B.C.*, Robert Harris, CAG H-8128

Materials

- indoor/outdoor thermometer
- metric measuring stick
- chart paper
- graph paper with large spaces
- markers

Context

These images portray dark, thickening clouds and snow covered mountains. This activity can be carried out before and during snow accumulation.

Activities

1. In looking at the cloud formations and mountain top images, students might discuss the tasks involved in predicting snowfall activity. As young snow sleuths, they might explore, through simple scientific experiments, the conditions under which snow forms and melts. Some snow can be brought into the classroom in a large glass container. Initially, all students could jot down their predictions, in minutes, of how long the snow will take to melt completely. In teams, the students could:

- measure the depth of the snow at set intervals (perhaps every 5 minutes) over the melting period
 - read the temperature of the snow at these same intervals
 - record measurements of both depth and temperature on classroom charts
2. While examining the charted information, students can share their observations about the changes from solid to liquid and their thoughts about the process. The student whose prediction of the melting time was most accurate could be the official recorder of, for example, the daily temperature on a large class-made chart.

Ideas for Assessment

Information gained from simple daily and weekly recording of such things as temperature, amounts of precipitation, cloud formations, and weather phenomenon can help children learn much about weather and scientific method. It is a springboard for such activities as researching, mapping, graphing, and sketching or, possibly, a weather exchange project with a similar classroom in another part of Canada



Lesson #3: Whirling Weather Bodies

Objective Students will interpret various aspects of snow through dramatic movement and dance.

Related Art Work(s)

- *Charlotte-town from our Drawing Room Window*, Margaret Beazley, CAG 90.8 b

Materials

- music that pertains to snow such as *Four Seasons*, Vivaldi , or *Neiges*, Andre Gagnon
- additional images of Canadian winter by such artists as William Kurelek, Emily Carr, and Ted Harrison
- space for students to move freely

Context

This activity works well during those long winter days when students and teachers are forced, by inclement weather, to stay inside.

Activities

1. As students examine images of rural Canada in winter, they can imagine themselves as choreographers of snow dances that might take place in the foreground of the pictures.
2. In their own spaces, students could be asked to portray, through expressive body movements, the effects of different kinds of snow on each of their five senses (e.g., they might be walking in slush, tasting snowflakes, listening to ice pellets crash against their windows, smelling a spring melt, or watching as the sun glistens on a frozen drift).
3. Students could then be encouraged to use low, middle, and high spaces and all of their body parts as they create images of snow falling lightly, blowing in soft breezes or strong gusts, freezing as it hits the ground, melting in the afternoon sun or piled high in drifts. They can stop periodically to watch and celebrate others in their portrayals.

Ideas for Extension and Assessment

Using music they like, students can be invited to work in groups to prepare a dance piece that would evoke the feelings in the Harris image. Narration of winter poetry might accompany the pieces. This is an ideal activity to share with parents and community folks in a school assembly.



Lesson #4: Just Grin and Enjoy it!

Objective Students will explore ways in which the winter season was and is celebrated by children and their families in rural Canada.

Related Art Work(s)

- *Sullivan House*, CAG H-1924
- *Untitled*, Robert Harris, CAG H-2227

Materials

- used magazines and newspapers
- collected photos of students and families engaged in winter fun
- mural paper
- scissors
- glue.
- fabric
- found materials

Context

There is much to celebrate during the winter season in Canada. Students can enjoy examining and comparing winter pastimes from early days to the present.

Activities

1. After an examination of Harris' photo with horse and sleigh and sketch of the skaters, students can discuss the similarities and differences between family winter activities in the early 1900s and now. Their observations will reveal some obvious changes in activities due, in part, to the development of technological knowledge, as well as the diversity in the ways in which various cultures celebrate winter.
2. Students might then collect a variety of cut out, sketched, or photographed images to create an illustrated timeline entitled Winter Pastimes – Then and Now for display in a long hallway in their school. Students may need to create their own images of early Canadian pastimes based on individual research or interviews with grand and great grandparents. Their images might be depicted through various media such as fabric, paint, plasticine, popsicle sticks, or found objects.

Suggested Resources

- story books depicting the joys and woes of snow such as
- *The Snowman*, Raymond Briggs, 1984
- *Katy and the Big Snow* by Virginia Lee Burton, 1974
- internet sites such as Environment Canada and the National Weather Services

Possible Extensions

A class debate might focus on the positive and negative effects of technology on our winter pastimes over the years.

The mural might serve as wonderful material for a photo documentary in which students, dressed in authentic costume, are videotaped as they speak about their pastimes at each section of the timeline.

Students might be invited to become winter weather experts, researching, reporting, and delivering humorous weather reports or trivia over the school intercom system each day.

Students might develop homemade weather books or calendars containing scientific observations, notes, sketches, artifacts, and photographs. These might be shared through communication with students and teachers in classrooms in a different part of Canada.

