# **Tegnebræt 1Hunting and fishing in the Icefjord**

## Intermediate level

*Hunting and fishing in the Icefjord* is one out of six books associated with the ice floes in the exhibition at the Icefjord Centre.

**Subjects**

Intercurricular – science – religion

**Learning objectives**

* The students gain knowledge about how traditional hunting and fishing methods are still being used – although with more modern equipment. And for some just as a supplement.
* They acquire a special knowledge about the big sea mammals such as seals and whales that were vital for the settlers – about a life where securing good hunting conditions and luck observing special rituals was crucial.
* The students practise their skills in communication and collaboration.

**Organization**

Let the students work in small groups, pairs or individually. Depending on what suits each student best and the competences to be developed. Keep in mind that your best friend is not necessarily the one you collaborate best with. Working together is about *working* together and not just *being* together.

**About the material**

The digital material is in Keynote format. If the students are not familiar with this program, the material can be downloaded in PowerPoint format.

The process consists of three stages:

* Introduction to the book *Hunting and fishing in the Icefjord*
* Working with the chapters of the book
* Reflections on the process and further treatment of selected topics

**Page by page guide**

**The book**

Let the students explore the book *Hunting and fishing in the Icefjord*. It is the basis for the tasks the students will work on. It contains five chapters, each of them divided into two or three sections.

To each section in the book some tasks are given for the students to solve. There is a text to read and then some questions to work on. The page references to the book and supplementary links may help the students to find answers. Encourage the students to think of more questions.

What method they use in solving their task depends on what they are familiar with – or they might learn a new method. You can choose: text, audio, image and/or drawing. If more room is needed for the answers, extra slides can be added.

**Greenland halibut fishing**

This chapter consists of three sections.

*More than 300 years of fishing for Greenland halibut on the sea ice*

Let the students study the picture and discuss with their partner what they see and what they wonder at. In the book they can see a bigger version of the same picture, p. 11.

After reading the text, they are to work with these questions:

* Give a detailed description of the picture.
* On the next slide is a picture of fishing at the edge of the ice in Ilulissat 1925. How was the catch brought home 100 years ago?
* Click on the link and find information about the [Greenland halibut](https://natur.gl/arter/the-greenland-halibut/?lang=en). This I know about the Greenland halibut:

A model for *image analysis* could be used for the first question.

*The dog sled*

The students are shown two pictures taken 80 years apart. In the book at pages 14-17 they can study bigger versions. Let them talk with their partner or the group about the differences and similarities in the two pictures.

After reading the text, they are to work with these questions:

* The sled dog is the only working animal used in northern Greenland. Mention other places where working animals are used, and what animals they are.
* Why is the dog sled still an important means of transport even though snowmobiles are available?
* What do you know about the Greenland sled dog? Find more information in the book [Quimmeq](https://isfjordscentret.gl/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/QIMMEQ_BOG_groenlandsk-engelsk_t.-godk.pdf).

Talk with the students about the concepts *past*, *present* and *working animals*.

*Dinghy fishing today*

The fishing industry is an important source of employment and income in Ilulissat. Formerly primarily Greenland halibut was caught. In recent years halibut fishing has declined significantly and prawn fishing has been gaining in importance.

After reading the text, the students are to work with these questions:

* In the picture a 300 years old fishing method is being used. Which one?
* How are Greenland halibut caught in winter?
* How big can a Greenland halibut become? Length and weight? (Answers can be found here: [Greenland halibut](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenland_halibut))

**Seal hunting**

This chapter has three sections. All three sections take a historic view.

*Summer hunting with kayaks*

Let the students find the Disko Bay and the Icefjord on a map.

Talk with the students about the first settlers at the Icefjord, the Saqqaq people – they lived there from 2500 to 800 BC. Then for more than thousand years no humans lived in the area until Inuit, the Thule people, arrived. They are the ancestors of the Greenlandic people. Read about the [saqqaq people](http://www.sisimiut.museum.gl/Default.aspx?ID=2146).

After reading the text, the students are to work with these questions:

* Which other prehistoric hunting weapon is similar to the harpoon – is it still used for hunting?
* What was the floats made of? Get help at p. 25 in the book.
* Write, draw or record a story with the title *A dangerous journey from Canada to the Disko Bay in 1249*.

Talk with the students about [migration](https://visitgreenland.com/about-greenland/migration-greenland/) to Greenland.

*Winter hunting on the sea ice*

Hunting from the sea ice is called *breathing hole hunting*. The breathing holes of sea mammals make it easy to catch the animals when they come up for air. In the past harpoons were used, but today they are caught with net.

After reading the text, the students are to work with these questions:

* Why was the ringed seal vital to the people of the past?
* In the picture a seal is being drawn out of the breathing hole. How has it been caught?
* For how many thousand years has breathing hole hunting been known?

Talk with the students about the practice of breathing hole hunting. Today this mostly is done to catch Greenland halibut and just as a supplement or a hobby.

*The uses of seals*

The ringed seal spends its entire life in the Icefjord. It has been important food for people at the fjord, especially on account of the high amounts of vitamins C and D in the meat. This would prevent diseases like scurvy. The blubber not eaten was melted and used for heating and lighting.

After reading the text, the students are to work with these questions:

* Which tool is the woman in the picture using, and what is she doing?
* Make a list of the things a seal can be used for.
* Why was it important to eat seal meat – especially in winter?

Talk with the students about the importance of vitamins for human survival – about polar darkness and the need for warmth and light without electricity.

**Whale hunting**

This chapter has three sections. All sections take a historic view. Further information here: [whales](https://visitgreenland.com/wildlife-in-greenland/whales/).

*Hunting in an umiak*

The umiak was until the 1920s used as a hunting and cargo boat and for visiting. It is a skin boat and despite its big cargo-carrying capacity it was so light that it could be carried over the ice where passage was blocked.

 The umiak was the vessel that in combination with the dog sled and the kayak made the Inuit immigration into Greenland possible.

 The boats, rowed by women, transported people, dogs and equipment through the ice-cold waters, filled with rocks and ice floes, usually escorted by men in kayaks. In the past they were also used for whale hunting when the men rowed the boat noiselessly forward to approach the enormous animals.

After reading the text, the students are to work with this task:

* The drawing shows hunting of whales and seals 100 years ago. Draw an umiak and provide a caption. Your text must explain if the boat is rowed by men or women and why.

*Sassat – beluga whale and narwhal hunting on the sea ice*

The beluga whale lives, like the bowhead whale and the narwhal, in close interaction with the pack ice. At times it happens that the temperature suddenly takes a dramatic dip and the fjord freezes over, giving the whales a problem as they need openings in the ice to breathe. In such a situation a group of whales risk being caught in a hole, surrounded by ice on all sides. This is called a *sassat* – the Greenlandic name for a flock of whales caught in the ice.

After reading the text, the students are to work with these questions:

* What does the Greenlandic word *sassat* mean? Get help at p. 41 in the book.
* Explain why sassat occurs more seldom today.
* In the next slide is a picture of a narwhal. Guess how long it is.

*The uses of whales*

Whale hunting has a history of 4500 years. Every part of the whales was used. They were vital to the survival of the settlement in the cold Arctic.

After reading the text, the students are to work with these questions:

* What tools were made from whalebones?
* Make a list of whales living at Greenland. (Find information here: [whales](https://visitgreenland.com/wildlife-in-greenland/whales/))
* The man in the picture is building his winter house. What materials does he need to finish the house?

Talk with the students about the whalers that came from Europe in the period 1600-1900 – about the extraction of the precious train oil for the Europeans.

In groups the students can choose one or more whales from their lists to continue working with. The medium is their own choice.

**The shaman and the relation between nature and human beings**

The chapter contains three sections, all about beliefs and superstition.

*The shaman*

The angakkoq is an Inuit shaman, a necromancer. He was highly respected in the Inuit community. He acted as a priest, psychologist, doctor, healer, sperm donor and moral police officer solving the problems and conflicts in the community. Angakkoq’s central function was to serve as a link between humans and the spiritual world.

After reading the text, the students are to work with these questions:

* How did the shaman travel from the physical world to the spiritual?
* The Mother of the Sea and the Weather Being lived in the spiritual world. Name other beings living in the spiritual world.
* In former times the belief in spirits and magic was a part of Inuit's everyday life. Why does the belief in spiritual beings arise?

Talk with the students about the concepts *belief* and *superstition*. And about the Inuit religion shaped by the harsh nature and the polar darkness.

*The legend of the Mother of the Sea*

The Mother of the Sea was to Inuit a highly respected mythical creature. In short this is the legend: “The Mother of the Sea was bothered by the Inuits’ evil deeds at the settlement and as a punishment gathered all the animals the Inuits used to hunt in her fiery hair at the bottom of the sea.” Read more about the legend [here](https://visitgreenland.com/about-greenland/legend-mother-sea/).

On slide 18 the students can watch a short animation of *The shaman’s journey to the Mother of the Sea*. On slide 19 is a text about the legend.

When they have watched the animation and read the text, they return to slide 18 to work on this task:

* Write comments for the pictures, or record your story.

There are six pictures from the animation. They can add a text box under each picture and write a comment, or they can record their story.

*The legend of the Weather Being*

The students are introduced to the concept *inua*. The word inua means “its human” or “its master” and signified the power that gave life to a thing and soul to animals. The inua of an iceberg was what made the iceberg alive. Because inua was found in everything in nature, the entire physical world was alive and thus should be treated with respect and consideration.

Talk with the students about the concepts of *animation* and *nature worship*.

After reading the text, the students are to work with these questions:

* Explain what the words *taboo* and *ritual* means. Give some examples of both.
* Why was the weater inua especially important to inuit?

Talk with the students about the concepts *taboo* and *rituals*.

**Preparations for the hunt**

This chapter has two sections, both about beliefs and superstition.

*Amulets and rituals*

The Inuit, the forefathers of the Greenlanders, were dependent on the powers and forces of nature, and for the hunters upholding good relations with the souls of the game animals was of great importance. To secure good luck in the hunt and to avoid accidents taboos and rituals were to be observed. For this amulets and symbols were used.

After reading the text, the students are to work with these questions:

* Take a good look at the picture. It is an amulet of a bird. Which bird is it? What qualities might it transfer to its owner?
* A pigeon is a symbol of peace. Do you know any other symbols?

*Women and clothing*

It was important to secure the husband’s luck in hunting that his wife too observed the taboos and rituals. Furthermore she should be good at sewing and decorating her husband’s clothes so that they were not only warm but also beautifully

ornamented in order to attract the animals.

After reading the text, the students are to work with these questions:

* What was the significance of women in relation to hunting?
* The picture shows a man's dress. What is it made of, and with what is it decorated? Find help at p. 59 in the book.
* What did a woman's dress look like?

Talk with the students about the rigid distribution of roles and jobs between men and women in the past, and how things are today.

**Reflections and further work**

Hold a review in class where the students reveal what made them wonder, and what topics they found most interesting.

Let them choose a topic to study more closely. Ask them to give reasons for why and what they want to look into.

Show the chosen topics on the board/screen and introduce them. Let the students work in groups or pairs with their subjects. Some might prefer to work alone.

Their products can be presented as a book or a comic strip. Suitable digital formats are Book Creator and Pixton. For the youngest paper format such as a poster may be best.

**Colophon**

The teaching material for the book *Hunting and fishing in the Icefjord* has been developed for the Icefjord Centre in Ilulissat by Lotte Brinkmann and Daniella Maria Manuel, Anholt Læringsværksted.

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